Hafa Adai!

Happy New Year!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
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to cast your vote.

93 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Top Stories

The epic election that made Barack Obama the first African-American president was the top news story of 2008.

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Heath Ledger's death was voted 2008's top entertainment story by U.S. newspaper and broadcast editors.

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PERSON OF THE YEAR

Bishop Tomas Aguon Camacho

BY NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The 13th day of this month marks a momentous occasion not only in the life of a most respected leader but also in the history of Catholicism in the Northern Mariana Islands because exactly 24 years ago, the CNMI's native son, then Monsignor Tomas Aguon Camacho, was ordained as the first Bishop of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa.

The creation by the Vatican of the Diocese on Nov. 8, 1984, and the appointment by Pope John Paul II of Camacho Jan. 13, 1985, to the top pastoral position on Saipan heralded the Vatican's planned decision to ecclesiastically separate, once again after more than 300 years, the rest of the Northern Marianas from the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Agatna.

"To come to the priesthood was a call from God."

Author Jess R.A. Sonoda, in a short biography titled *From Goatherd to Shepherd,* chronicled the life of Camacho and depicted the young man's journey to priesthood, starting out as a lad herding goats into the field, a son and brother in a traditional Chamorro family, his brief sojourn as a child in Palau, and a man destined to be the spiritual guide of an infant Diocese.

The book was especially written for the Bishop's 75th birthday on Sept. 18, 2008. It tells of his kindred spirit, human frailties and challenges, a story of "a man grounded by faith, totally dependent on God's grace and providence" and reveals his true vocation as "shepherd to the people of God in the CNMI."

According to church regulations known as Canon Law, Camacho as bishop is required to submit his letter of resignation to Pope Benedict XVI upon reaching the age of 75, which he did.

However, the Bishop will wait for the Vatican's decision as to whether or not the resignation will be accepted. So he will continue to serve in his current capacity until a new bishop is appointed. The process of choosing his successor would normally take about eight months or less.

Before his successor is named, it is just appropriate that His Most Reverend Bishop Camacho is named *Saipan Tribune*'s

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Local

NEWSMAKERS OF THE YEAR

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA

ANTONIO MUÑA

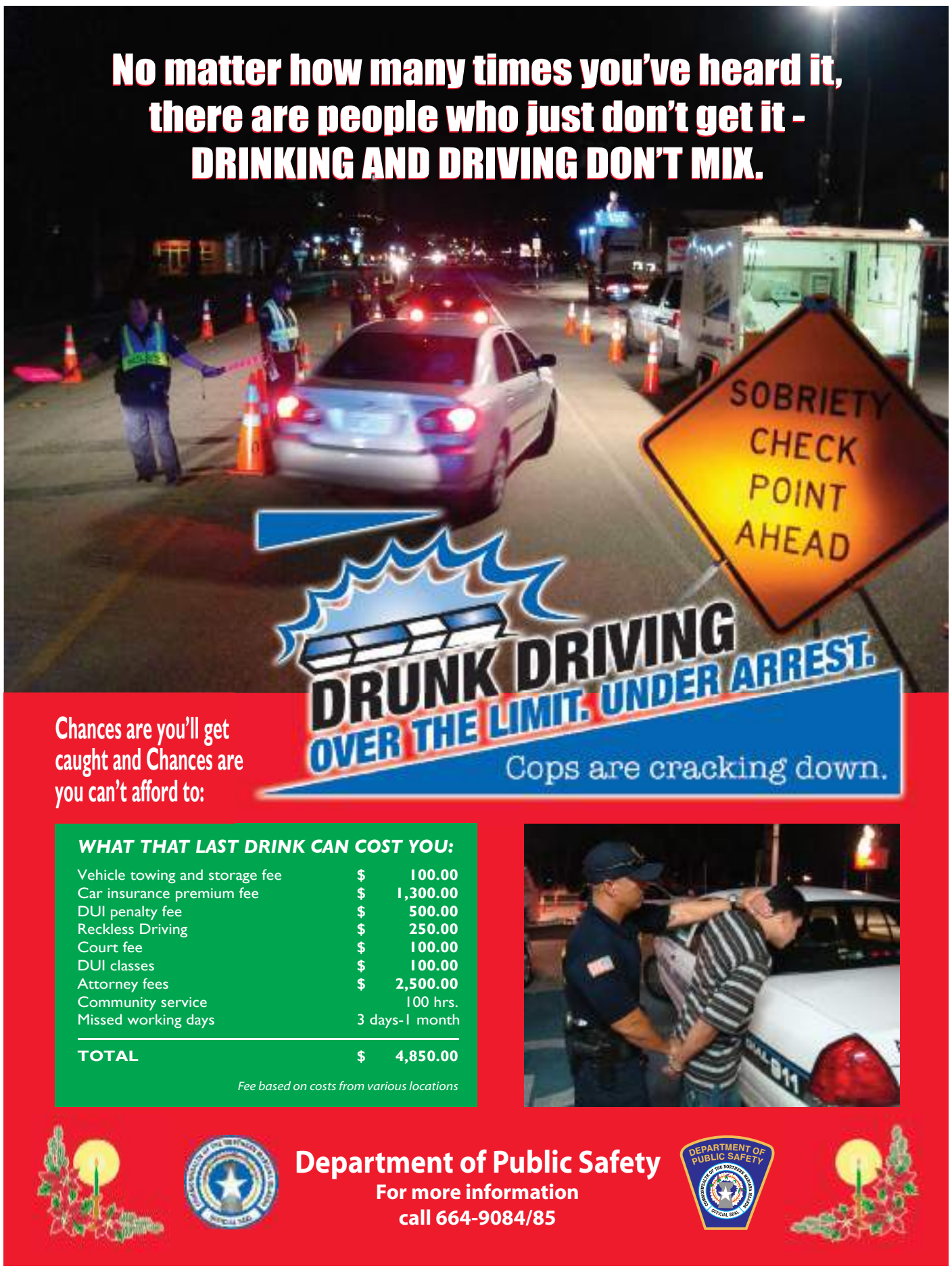
Antonio Muña, the golden boy who snatched Bank of Saipan from the jaws of imminent closure, had arguably the worst year in 2008, his reputation as a troubleshooter sorely tested by the power crisis that gripped most of the year. Considered one of the islands' most highly respected figures, Muña ended 2008 with his name, fairly or not, vilified in some circles for the sometimes 12-hour rotating blackouts that hit Saipan for several months this year. Although most of the problems besetting the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. were largely inherited from past mismanagement and incompetence, Muña, as the current CUC executive director, became the face of that crisis and got the onus of the flak, worsened by perceptions in some circles that he was mostly doing damage control for the Fitial administration. The nearly daily complaints against CUC became muted, though, with the arrival of the temporary Aggreko generators but, unless a long-term solution to the power crisis is found, it is almost a given that Muña will be in for another round of public condemnation come September 2009, when the Aggreko contract ends.

JIM BELL

On June 9 this year, James H. Bell celebrated his 70th birthday by repeating a feat he first achieved nearly three decades ago—swimming across the channel from Tinian to Saipan. This time, though, he went in the opposite direction, going from Saipan to Tinian, managing to swim the five-mile distance in under five hours. He followed this up by swimming around the entire island of Saipan—a 45-mile distance—in several stages. He started his journey on July 4, 2008, and completed his last leg on Sept. 20, 2008. Bell's superhuman adventures were not without its share of drama. On Oct. 4, a Saturday, Bell tried to repeat his channel crossing from Saipan to Tinian. He was dropped off at the Unai Obyan Beach at 9:30am. He should have been on Tinian five hours later but nightfall came and no sign of Bell. Coast Guard choppers sent to search for him found Bell still swimming at 9am of Sunday, more than 24 hours later. He said a strong tide swept him away, forcing him to spend the night in the shark-infested waters. He waved away the Coast Guard's offer of help and completed the swim hours later. At the moment, Bell is trying to swim around the island of Tinian, again in several stages. The point of all these? Bell is practicing for his next goal—to cross the Torres Strait from Papua New Guinea to the Australian mainland. When asked why he wanted to do something like this, he responded: "I wanted to do something that hadn't been done before. I want to be an inspiration to others (I don't want to encourage people to take up channel swimming), but being 70 shouldn't keep you from doing what you want to do. You don't have to look at things as if they are written in stone." Inspiration, indeed!

GREGORIO "KILILI" SABLAN

Elected as the first ever Delegate for the Northern Mariana Islands, Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan became the first beneficiary of the federalization law that granted the Commonwealth its first elected representative to the U.S. Congress. Although a largely symbolic role due to its non-voting status, the position enables the CNMI to sit at the table in Washington D.C. and gives it a voice in various committees where bills that could affect the islands originate. Like former *Saipan Tribune* Person of the Year honoree, Tina Sablan, Kilili Sablan came into office largely through the efforts of grassroots campaigning, eschewing traditional means such as splashy advertisements, a bottomless campaign war chest, and the benefit of an extensive clan that would vote as a bloc. His impeccable reputation as a former executive director of the Commonwealth Election Commission and his personal humility and charisma may have propelled him to victory but, for good or ill, it will be his performance in the nation's capital that will judge his place in Commonwealth history.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GREG CRUZ

A man who inspires strong emotions, Greg Cruz, as the self-styled activist and community agitator, has become a loud voice for the islands' disenchanted indigenous population. Advocating priority employment for local residents, Cruz has nevertheless also injected his opinions on other issues, ranging from homestead applications to alleged corrupt activities of some officials. Some people question his methods and not a few despise his ideology but, whether they like it or not, Cruz has given a face and a voice to the largely ignored indigenous masses who have become disaffected about how the local government works and cynical about what it takes to get things done around here. Attempts have been made to put him down and belittle his efforts but his truculent posture and insistence on being heard has put most of the island's politicians and officials on notice that this is someone who will not be easily swayed or silenced.

PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

According to its website, the Pew Charitable Trusts is an independent nonprofit founded by the sons and daughters of Sun Oil Co. founder Joseph N. Pew and his wife, Mary Anderson Pew. This group came to the attention of the CNMI after it made a ham-handed effort to convince the Commonwealth to support the designation of the northernmost islands of Uracas, Maug, and Asuncion as a national monument by President Bush. Ham-handed because, despite the admirable goals of the project, it instead became a lightning rod for controversy, with most of those opposed to the idea taking offense at the perceived condescension with which Pew presented the idea to the community. This was not helped by the alleged lack of consultation among local officials, who chorused their opposition to the proposal. Taken aback, Pew changed tack and went on a broad campaign spree to garner support for the project, if not among local officials, then at least within the community. The effort paid off with thousands of signatures gathered and a barrage of letters to the White House—all in support of the project. President Bush is due to make a decision on the issue before he steps down from office in January.

IRENE TANTIADO

A former president of the United Coalition of Workers, Irene Tantiado broke away from the group and now heads the

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Federalization comes to the Northern Marianas

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Hailed by some as the birth of an era for human rights in the Commonwealth and condemned by others as the last nail in the coffin of the Commonwealth economy, the imposition of federal immigration law on the Northern Marianas is undoubtedly the biggest news to hit the islands in 2008.

On May 9, 2008, President George W. Bush signed into law a bill applying federal immigration law to the Northern Marianas. The new law also granted the Commonwealth a non-voting delegate seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. ***(See sidebar)***

Under the law, U.S. immigration rules must apply in the CNMI beginning June 1, 2009, unless the Secretary of Homeland Security decides to delay the start of the transition period. The transition period cannot be delayed more than 180 days.

Bush

But the White House's action was not the last word on "federalization," which the CNMI government had fought at great lengths for two decades.

On Sept. 12, 2008, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial filed a lawsuit in the federal court for the District of Columbia in a bid to block the pending federal takeover of local labor. At issue in the governor's complaint are the labor provisions of the federalization law, which Fitial claims the U.S. Congress does not have the authority to impose upon the Commonwealth. The governor also says that federalization is against the CNMI's Covenant-protected right to self-government.

The lawsuit, which is being funded by undisclosed sources, is still pending in court.

Meanwhile, local efforts are underway to try to influence the regulations being crafted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for the implementation of the new immigration law on June 1, 2009.

Two of the key issues under negotiation are the CNMI's request for visa waivers for Chinese and Russian travelers visiting the islands and special consideration for the foreign investors in the Commonwealth. The CNMI government is also seeking help with the consequences that the new rules might have for the immediate alien relatives of U.S. and Freely Associated States citizens, for the guest workers who must meet certain income criteria to secure temporary work visas, and for the permanent foreign residents and retirees. In addition, the government is asking the DHS to give priority to local immigration employees and U.S. citizens in the Commonwealth when hiring in the CNMI.

While the CNMI appears to have scored a minor victory with the foreign investor visas, hopes are dim that the Northern Marianas will have continued tourism from China and Russia under the new Guam-CNMI visa waiver program. But until the actual regulations come out, it seems one can only hope for the best.

'Kilili' Sablan strides into the pages of NMI's history books

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

No. 8 on the ballot, Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan made history in 2008, when he became the Northern Marianas' first-ever delegate to the U.S. Congress.

The momentous election took place on Nov. 4, 2008, a day already laden with history for the people of the Commonwealth. On that day, Northern Marianas residents marked the 22nd year since former President Ronald Regan proclaimed the U.S. trusteeship agreement under the United Nations no longer applicable to the CNMI and, under the terms of the Covenant, declared qualified residents of the CNMI became U.S. citizens.

Sablan claimed victory after beating his closest rival, seven-year Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio, by 357 votes. The independent candidate also defeated seven other opponents including local television talk show host John Oliver Gonzales, retired judge Juan T. Lizama, incumbent Sen. Luis Crisostimo, former senator David Cing, businessman Chong Won, Saipan municipal councilman Felipe Atalig, and high school teacher John Davis Jr.

Even before the dust had settled, Sablan began easing into his new role. Days before the absentee votes were counted, he traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the official orientation session for newly elected members of Congress. He also met with other ranking Democrats in Congress and visited with his counterparts from the other Pacific islands.

"[T]he people of the CNMI have waited too long to be represented, so I'm not going to miss any opportunity to start building relationships in Congress and learning about the tools the Delegate will have to improve life in the CNMI," he had said.

Sablan will be officially sworn into office on Jan. 6, 2009, when the House of Representatives convenes to begin the 111th Congress. He will join the lawmaking body as a member with limited voting powers. He can serve on committees, as well as vote on legislation at the committee level. But floor voting will not be permitted.

Similar to House members and other delegates, the CNMI delegate will be elected to Congress every two years.

The Northern Marianas is the last U.S. jurisdiction to get congressional representation. The long-coveted seat was granted the CNMI in May 9, 2008, when President Bush signed a law that also allowed Washington to take over labor and immigration controls in the Commonwealth.

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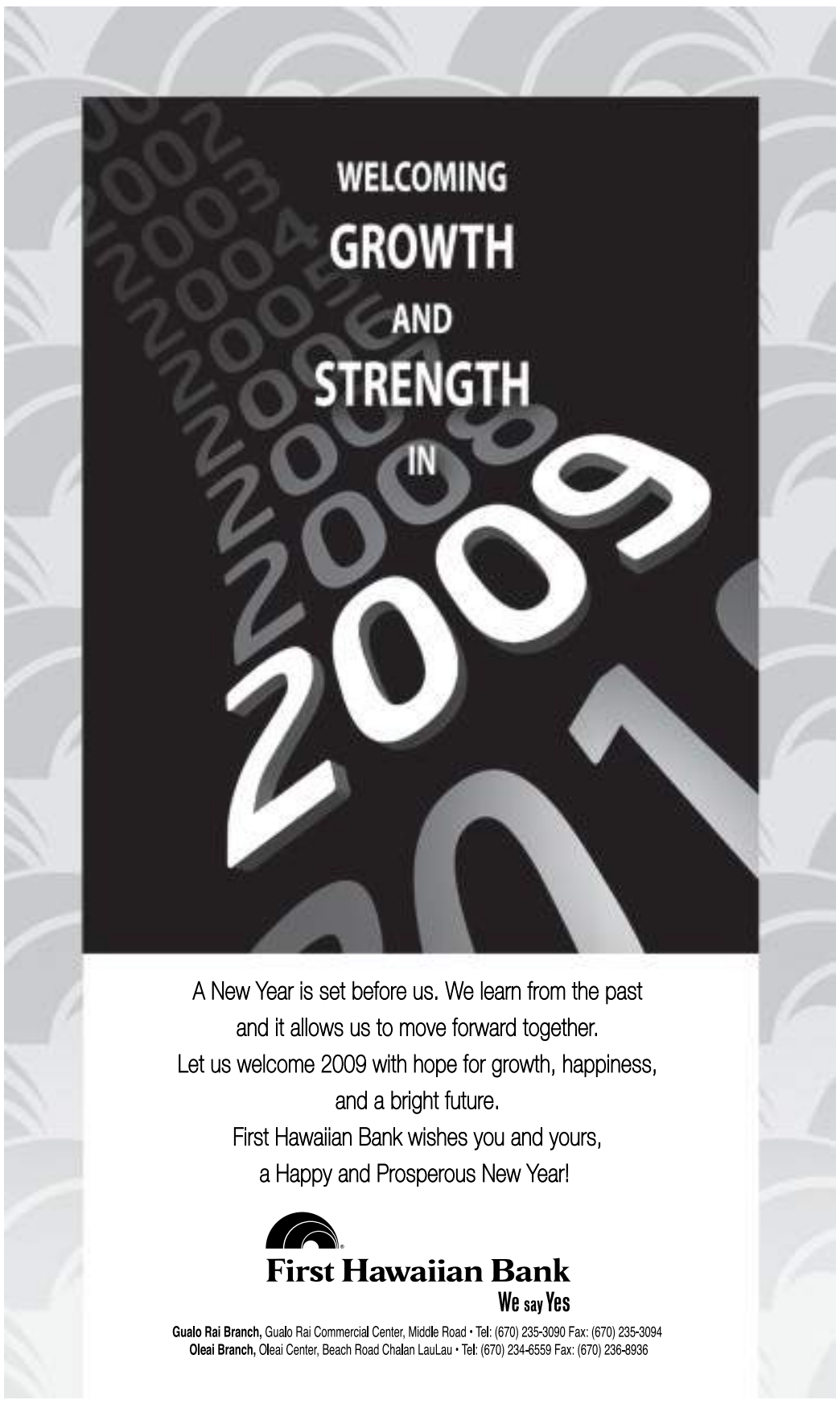
WELCOMING
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BISHOP

From Page 1

This was taken during the Bishop's 75th birthday on Sept. 18, 2008. At right is Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales.

2008 Person of the Year, a fitting tribute to his 47 long years of priestly ministry—the first time the honor is given to a leader from the religious sector.

For the past several years, this special annual recognition had been accorded to an individual or individuals, or groups or sectors for their extraordinary efforts during the year. To mention some of them: then Rota Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona for leading the revival and rehabilitation of the island after two powerful typhoons in 2002; all the community groups for their volunteering efforts in 2003; Wilgene Lieto and Derence Jack for their heroism in Iraq in 2005; Beautify CNMI for its environmental concerns in 2006; and Tina Sablan for her meteoric rise to the political scene in 2007.

During the interview, the Bishop was unaware that such recognition is being accorded to him. He shared with the *Saipan Tribune* some of his experiences and ideas, his visions for the future of the church and its people as well as his encouragements for his successor.

A call from God

"To come to the priesthood was a call from God," the Bishop said. He said it is a privilege to serve Him directly.

After finishing education at the St. Patrick Seminary in San Francisco, California in 1961, Camacho went back to Guam, given the opportunity to practice his vocation in Rota, though this was short-lived because he was called back to Guam after two years.

Asked to recollect about the church and the people of the CNMI during those days, Camacho said that in 1971 the islands under the Trust Territory government were very poor.

The opportunity to serve the very same people he grew up with came in 1976, the transition year from Trust Territory to

The Bishop with other priests during a High Mass at the St. Carmel Cathedral.

where then Bishop Baumgartner administered his ordination as a priest on June 14 of the same year.

He recalled that on that very same day, his father Tun Bidat could not attend the event because it was at the very same time that the elder Camacho was receiving the sacrament of the sick, miles away from Saipan. His father died of lung cancer four months after his ordination into the priesthood.

"That is still vivid in my memory," he said.

The young priest spent eight years in Guam teaching in Catholic schools. In 1968 he was Commonwealth. From then on, he settled here on Saipan permanently after being named Pastor of the Mt. Carmel Church.

It was the same Church where, as a young boy, he spent most of his time as an altar server. "I was close to the Church. When I was 12 years old, I was an altar server to the Spanish Jesuit priest and that started it," he said.

So when he became the Pastor of the Church, he saw that "people were very enthusiastic and practiced their faith regularly." This made it easy for him, particularly since he felt at home practicing his vocation.

"I was born here and raised here. Majority of the people are my relatives, so it was easy for me to adapt because everybody knows me at that time. So we worked together."

Years later and during his tenure as Bishop, the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa grew to 13 parishes that spread across the CNMI.

Challenges and changes

While some people talk about the CNMI being a diversified culture, Camacho said the "influences that we receive from outside that are contrary to Christian principles" are the biggest challenges the Roman Catholic Church faces today.

In schools, the Bishop said many students openly contradict the teachings of Jesus Christ. However, Camacho said he is proud of Mt. Carmel School's achievement in propagating Catholic education.

"I am proud that we have a topnotch school that had been in existence for 50 years. Our graduates have no problem attending colleges even in the U.S. mainland. My wish is that more people would come to attend our school because of their faith. Here we teach the Catholic faith," he said.

Camacho highlighted the increasing role of the faithful within the Church as the most significant change yet.

"Before, the people let the church do everything. There is a beautiful transformation now in the church because people have taken over the church and made it their own," he said.

The Bishop said the parish councils are actively leading such significant change and, through his guidance, the councils are the leading force behind this.

"This is a tremendous thing, each parish have taken ownership of their church. They work hard for the parish. I am so happy with this transformation," he said.

For instance, he said the people in the community are very generous to their church. "All churches are well-maintained," he said.

He said that the continuing improvement of the Mount Carmel Cathedral was made almost entirely through donations from the community.

Legacies

Just before submitting his resignation to the Vatican, Bishop Camacho finished translating from English to Chamorro the Nuevu Testamento (The Chamorro New Testament). A few years back, he translated two important documents, the Sacramentary and the Lectionary. The Lectionary is a book containing all Scripture readings, usually during Sunday Masses, while the Sacramentary is the new name of what used to be called "Roman Missal," which is a product of Vatican II and published under the authority of Pope Paul VI.

Camacho considers these translations as his legacies.

"I'm trying to finish translating the Old Testament, also from English to Chamorro," he said.

The KARIDAT Social Services Inc. is another legacy of the Bishop.

As founder, Camacho explained that all diocese around the church has the duty to take care of the poor "so it was very natural for me to put up a foundation like the KARIDAT to be able to serve the poor."

KARIDAT executive director Angie Guerrero had nothing but kind words to describe the Bishop, saying he is very compassionate, supportive and generous.

"He gives guidance, advice us for direction, takes an active influence to KARIDAT because he keeps in touch with us."

Lung cancer surgery

In May 2008, the Bishop underwent another major surgery. It was his fourth time to go under the knife but the lung cancer surgery was the most serious. In *From Goatherd to Shepherd*, Sonoda wrote of the Bishop saying after the surgery that he was ready to meet the Lord.

"At 75, I am very happy inside. For the past 30, years I was able to work closely with the people and they listened to my advice. They gave me tremendous support," Camacho said.

At the time of the surgery and miles away from the Straub Hospital in Honolulu, the people of Saipan led by no less than Gov. Benigno Fitial packed the Cathedral to pray for his recovery.

The Bishop survived the surgery but it has slowed him down. He is now seldom seen in public gatherings and has even missed some major church events.

He also trimmed down his time at the office. Cathedral Rector Fr. Ryan Jimenez said, "The will to serve the people is still there but the body is weak."

The Bishop has been saying that he's ready to retire but he vowed to continue serving the people and be their "priest around here" even after the Vatican names his successor.

"Rome will find a successor before I can step down," he said. For now, "I wish him luck and my prayers, definitely."

Camacho said every Bishop has his own charisma. "Most likely, some are better than me. Being younger has brighter ideas."

Regardless of who will be chosen as his successor, the most important thing, the Bishop said, is that "we depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us."

Bishop Camacho with some parishioners during a visit to his office recently.

The year when hours-long blackouts found the CNMI

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

2008 YEAR ENDER

It's something that seems so simple it's taken for granted. Nobody thinks about it until it's gone. But without it, civilization comes to a virtual standstill: lawmakers can't make laws; courts can't try individuals; motorists can't count on streetlights; residents can't take showers, flush toilets and, for those brave enough, can't drink the tap water.

It all depends on power. And this summer, the island of Saipan experienced very little of it.

Rotating outages have been going on for a while as the island deals with the dilapidated, mismanaged and neglected Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s engines.

Outages have been bad for some time, but it hit a crescendo in July and August, when it was nearly impossible to know when one would have power or be sitting in the dark with a small battery-powered fan.

When power was the most unreliable it was also the most expensive. The fluctuating electric rate per kilowatt hour reached an all-time high in August at 41.3 cents, more than double what it was a few months prior.

The load shedding schedule was disseminated but it was impossible for CUC to follow it when there just wasn't enough power being produced. The result? Outages lasting 12 hours, villages without running water for days, and backup generators breaking down from working too much.

But all that changed Sept. 11, when Aggreko stepped in and saved the day. Or, as some people might see it, stepped in without CUC looking at other options to save the day. Bringing in the $6-million emergency Aggreko engines was not without its hardships.

CUC executive director Antonio Muña spent a great deal of time explaining why Aggreko was the best choice for Saipan to obtain reliable and affordable power. But that was not enough. A law had to be passed exempting the Aggreko contract from review by the Public Utilities Corp. and CUC was forced to obtain a $3.5 million loan from Marianas Public Land Trust to make the initial $1.5 million payment on the generators and settle debts with other vendors.

"I am relieved not only for me, but from the public's standpoint," Muña said after receiving the $3.5 million check from MPLT. "With the emergency power from Aggreko…that will give us a chance to step back and approach fixing the engines without the desperation of meeting power demand at the same time."

Muna described the process of getting the loan and sealing the Aggreko deal as "a roller-coaster ride."

Since Aug. 1, CUC has been under a state of disaster emergency in order to circumvent procurement procedures and regulations relating to the generators.

Some lawmakers cried foul when the first emergency order, dated Aug. 1, was not made public until the middle of the month. Gov. Benigno Fitial responded with a lengthy explanation on the need for the order.

"The disaster declaration was drafted to address precisely the need to get these temporary power units in place as quickly as possible and shut down the potentially deadly Power Plant #1 engines. So, E0 2008-10

See THE YEAR on Page 6

Turbulence hits airline industry

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

2008 YEAR ENDER

The travel sector saw bits of encouraging developments in 2008. Rising arrivals from emerging markets such as China and Russia, as well as consistent gains by the Korea market, last year helped buoy up the ailing tourism industry.

But hopes of recovery were quickly tempered by national, if not global, events that either hinder airlines from operating much needed service to the Northern Marianas or to obstruct the Commonwealth's access to visitors.

Low sales and the sky-high cost of fuel during the early parts of the year pushed Continental Airlines in June to cut the only nonstop service between Saipan and Manila. The move shrank access to specialized medical care for locals and caused travel problems for many foreign workers from the Philippines.

When Northwest Airlines recently announced its plan to suspend its daily flights from Osaka in March 2009, the carrier said its decision came "in response to the global economic recession and softening customer demand."

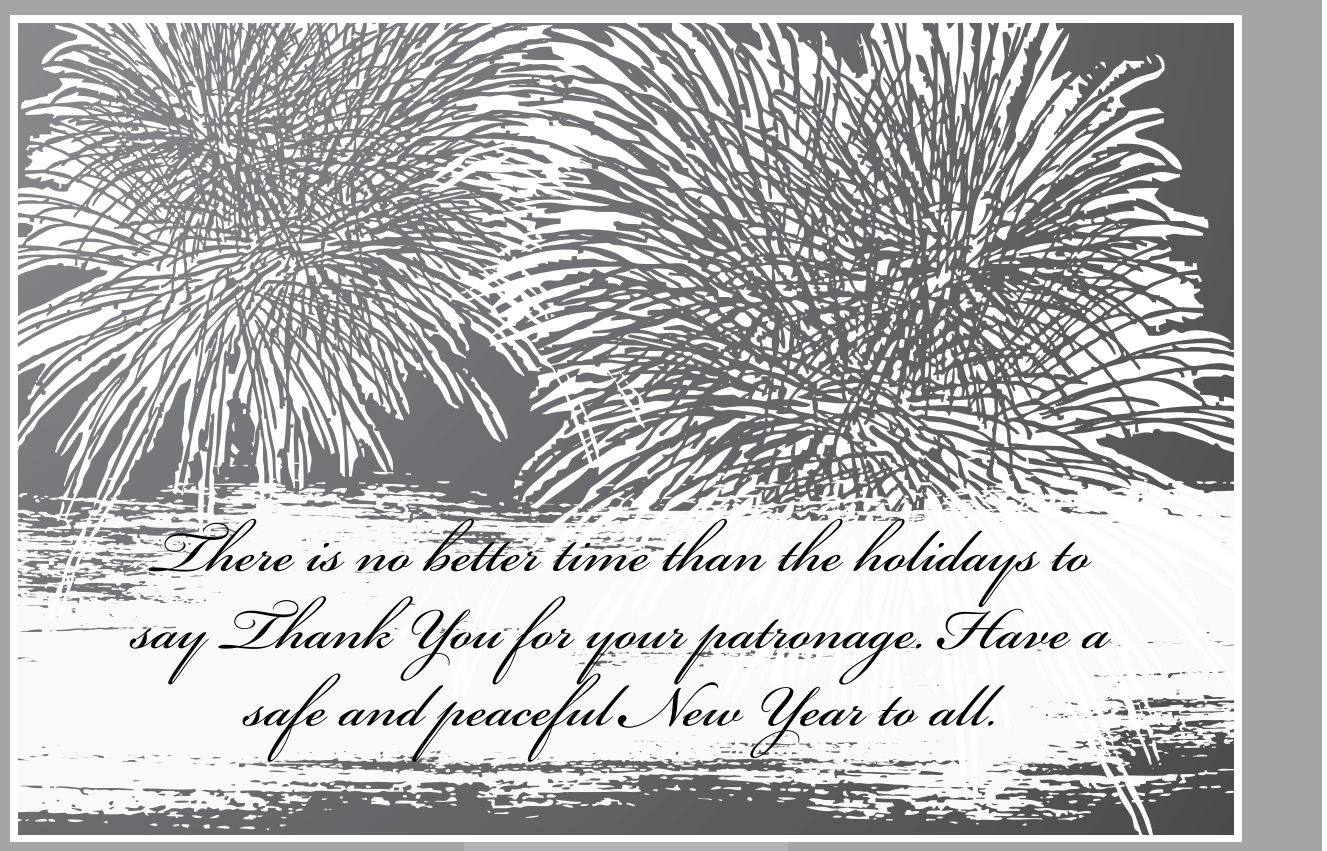
But the impending federal takeover of local immigration, which became law last May, is probably the greatest source of concern for the visitor industry. All indications point to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security rejecting the CNMI's plea for Chinese and Russian travelers to be included in the new Guam-CNMI visa waiver program.

According to a semiannual regulatory plan issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in November, visitors from China and Russia "cannot, at this time, seek admission under the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program due to security concerns."

Amid all these problems, it appears that Asiana Airlines will be the only one left to keep the visitor industry afloat.

Asiana has steadily increased its Saipan flights since its parent company, Kumho Asiana, purchased Laolao Bay Golf Resort. Today, Asiana offers the most flights to the Northern Marianas from the commonwealth's major tourism markets. The South Korea-based carrier flies to Saipan twice daily from Seoul and daily from Busan. Last week, just days before Northwest's announcement about its Osaka service, Asiana launched its three times weekly service from the Japanese city. Asiana is also instrumental in bringing in Russian visitors, many of whom travel to Saipan on Asiana's via-Korea trips.

But even Asiana is not without its troubles. The depreciation of the Korean won and a Korean government request to its citizens to cut back on overseas travel both led to a slowdown in Korean tourism to the Northern Marianas. Kwang Joong Kim, the airline's top official on Saipan, himself said Asiana lost money on the Saipan-South Korea route due to fewer Korean visitors.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2008: 'Annus horribilis' for CNMI's businesses

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Everywhere one turned this year "for rent" signs hung in the windows of empty buildings.

Businesses closed citing poor economic conditions, fewer tourists and high power rates.

The two most notable closures were Carmen Safeway and Blockbuster, with both businesses announcing they were seizing operations within the same week in October. Both closings were seen as a blow to the community and a sign of the hard times for the CNMI.

At the time of the announcement, Carmen Safeway general manager Eli Maravilla said the closure came as the store saw fewer customers and utility rates increased, cutting into profits. The store had employed 21 people before it closed, according to Maravilla, most of them hired from the local community.

Several government officials, in their declarations supporting Gov. Benigno Fitial's federalization lawsuit, cited the closure of Carmen Safeway as an example of the Commonwealth's current economic depression.

"The economic depression of the last three years has resulted in the departure from the Commonwealth of dozens of small (and not so small) businesses, which simply were unable to cover their costs and operate profitably in the community. Just this past week, the Borja family announced the closing of its Carmen Safeway Supermarket, one of the oldest supermarkets on the island," Finance Secretary Eloy Inos wrote in his declaration.

A days before the closure of Carmen Safeway was announced, Saipan's only branch of Blockbuster shut its doors for good.

Many local businesses also took a blow last week with dismal holiday sales.

J.C. Tenorio Enterprises, Inc., which owns a chain of retail and grocery stores on Saipan, said sales are down by as much as 20 percent this holiday season.

"This has been a very difficult Christmas for us," said corporate special project manager Bo Palacios.

Liberty Department Store's sales also were lagging behind last year's numbers, which forced the Garapan retailer to sell some of their items at cost.

Assistant sales manager Elvira Fruza said the uncertainty of June 2009's federal takeover of the islands' immigration, coupled with the current worldwide economic turmoil, has resulted in the tightening of people's purse strings.

But it hasn't been all bad news in the CNMI.

Hollywood Theaters, which shut its doors April, reopened about a month later. The seven-theater complex is the only movie theater on Saipan. Although the theater reopened it's been a struggle In September officials decided to close the theater twice weekly to cope with a downturn in business and high electricity costs. The theater resumed daily operations for the holiday season.

Also, La Isla Moda, a shop selling local souvenirs, recently opened in the heart of Garapan to target visitors.

The media frenzy over Miura's extradition

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For seven months in 2008, Saipan witnessed the most extensive media coverage it had ever had of an event on the island. The media frenzy was not stirred by local journalists, but by the huge flock of visiting Japanese media that covered the arrest of murder suspect Kazuyoshi Miura.

Miura was accused of plotting to kill his wife, Kazumi Miura, during a visit the couple made to Los Angeles, California, in 1981. Kazumi was shot in the head. She died of her wounds a year later in Japan.

L.A. prosecutors said Miura wanted his wife dead so he could collect $750,000 in life insurance policies. Miura was convicted in 1994 in Japan over his wife's murder and sentenced to life in prison. Four years later, a Japanese high court overturned the sentence.

Two days after local Immigration authorities arrested the then 60-year-old Miura at the Saipan International Airport on Feb. 22, about 50 Japanese journalists, mostly from TV stations and newspapers in Tokyo, descended on the island.

When Miura was first taken to the Superior Court for a bail hearing, DOC officers, court marshals, and court employees were taken aback at the presence of such a huge number of "aggressive" media. DOC officers who escorted Miura could hardly squeeze through the hallway as reporters, cameramen, and photographers blocked their way.

In the next hearing, Superior Court associate judge David Wiseman advised the visiting media not to act like paparazzi.

Wiseman's reminder resulted in a smoother transportation of Miura from the court to DOC. In the next hearing, about 20 police officers, 10 court marshals and probation officers assisted some 10 Corrections officers in bringing the defendant to the court and after the hearing.

The arrival of the Japanese media revived the ailing taxicab industry on the island. Their extensive coverage of the proceedings in court also helped the island's artists hone their drawing skills as artists were tapped as sketchers since cameras were not allowed inside the court.

Miura

After Miura hired three lawyers—Bruce Berline, Mark Hanson, and William Fitzgerald—his long court battle against his extradition to L.A. began. The extradition case even became more sensational when Miura retained pop star Michael Jackson's attorney, Mark J. Geragos, as his L.A. counsel.

Geragos raised the double jeopardy argument in California, while Miura's Saipan lawyers filed a petition for habeas corpus to challenge the extradition case.

The legal issues slowed down the proceedings until Superior Court associate judge Ramona Manglona in September denied Miura's petition for habeas corpus and ordered his extradition. Miura's counsel went to the CNMI Supreme Court. But the high court after a week affirmed the extradition order.

Miura did not give up. He went to U.S. District Court for the NMI. But after a few days, the California court ruled that Miura can be tried on the conspiracy charge.

On Sept. 29, Miura withdrew his petition for a writ of habeas in federal court. His lawyers announced that California "is now free to come" and escort their client.

In October, Los Angeles Police Detectives arrived and escorted Miura to California. The media frenzy on the island ended.

Less than 24 hours after he set foot in the U.S. to answer the murder charges, Miura committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell, bringing an end to the sordid 27-year saga.

THE YEAR

From Page 5

declared the disaster," Fitial wrote.

Throughout all this, some local residents decided to take matters into their own hands and circulated petitions and held rallies, asking for federal intervention and an investigation into CUC's activities.

The outcry began to quiet down as people became comfortable with 24-hour power and lower rates. So comfortable in fact that few attended public hearings where the PUC set new power rates for the next three months, and created a new system that would keep rates in place for six months at a time.

But the public is getting antsy once again as it becomes apparent that power generation is not CUC's only issue. In fact it's only one aspect of providing power. CUC and Aggreko can create so much power there's a surplus, but it means nothing if it can't be distributed to the residents and businesses on Saipan.

CUC's distribution system is also old and dilapidated, causing brownouts and the occasional islandwide blackout. But at least the outages are lasting only a few hours as opposed to 12 hours at a time.

And it's important not to forget that CUC is for sale for $250 million. The Legislature, against Fitial's veto and Muña's objections, passed a law seeking to privatize the utility agency for a quarter of a billion dollars. Any takers?

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January 26-27, 2009, 10 am to 6 pm in ABE Office.

New Student Registration:
January 28-29, 2009, 10 am to 6 pm in ABE Office.

Late Registration
January 30 - February 02, 2009, 9 am to 4 pm in ABE Office.

Student Orientation:
February 02, 2009, 5-6:30 pm in D-1

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Adult Basic Education Program
Spring 2009 Schedule

Adjunct Orientation:	January 16, 2009	F	06:00-07:30 PM	TBA
CASAS Appraisal Test	January 05-06 & 12-13, 2009	M-T	09:00-10:30 AM	K-1
			01:00-02:30 PM	K-1
			05:00-06:30 PM	K-1
CASAS Pre-Test	January 07-08 & 14-15, 2009	W-Th	09:00-10:30 AM	K-1
			01:00-02:30 PM	K-1
			05:00-06:30 PM	K-1
CASAS Post-Test	January 20-22, 200	T-Th	09:00-10:30 AM	K-1
For Referred Returning Students			01:00-02:30 PM	K-1
			05:00-06:30 PM	K-1
CASAS Make-Up Tests	January 20-22, 2009	T-Th	09:00-04:00 PM	K-2
Registration for Returning Students:	January 26-27, 2009	M-T	10:00-06:00 PM	ABE
Registration for New Students:	January 28-29, 2009	W-Th	10:00-06:00 PM	ABE
Late Registration:	January 30, February 02, 2009	F-M	09:00-04:00 PM	ABE
Student Orientation:	February 02, 2009	M	05:00-06:30 PM	D-1
Add/Drop for Students:	February 04-13, 2009		08:00-05:00 PM	ABE
First Day of Instruction:	M W F Classes	February 04, 2009 (Wednesday)		
T-Th Classes		February 05, 2009 (Thursday)		
	Saturday Classes	February 07, 2009		
	Sunday Classes	February 08, 2009		
Last Day of Instruction:	May 01, 2009			

This schedule is subject to change. For more information please contact the ABE Office at 234-5498 Ext. 1723 or 1724

This advertisement was paid for from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Proposed Amendment of the Official Saipan Zoning Map (Rezones)

We ask for your comments on proposed amendments (rezones) to the Official Saipan Zoning Maps, sheets 09 (Capitol Hill), 23 (As Lito, San Vicente), and 27 (Koblerville).

A public hearing will be held:
Date: Wednesday, January 7, 2009
Time: 6:00 pm
Place: Zoning Office Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, DanDan

The proposed map changes may be viewed at
Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, DanDan
Zoning Board website: www.zoning.gov.mp (publications page)

After the public hearing, the Zoning Board will make a decision on whether to approve any or all of the changes to the Official Zoning Maps.

Comments on the proposals may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office and must be received at the Zoning Office by 12:00 pm, Wednesday, January 7, 2009. Send written comments via e-mail to staff@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Office at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Saipan Zoning Law of 2007.

/s/ Dr. Elizabeth Rechebei
Acting Chairwoman

The indictment of Lt. Gov. Villagomez

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

2008 will definitely be remembered as the year when the second most powerful CNMI government official entered the federal court in handcuffs to face an indictment.

In the latter part of July, the island was already buzzing with rumors that Federal Bureau of Investigation agents have either arrested or questioned Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez while he was attending a conference in New York. The rumors had it that the lieutenant governor had been charged with misappropriation of federal funds during his tenure as director of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

A TV reporter even cornered Villagomez as he emerged from his office on Capital Hill and questioned him about the rumors. Villagomez denied it.

That denial was turned on its head in the early morning of Aug. 12, when media offices received calls about Villagomez's indictment and his scheduled hearing later that morning. The court and the U.S. Attorney's Office confirmed that there would be a hearing.

It turned out that on the same morning when the indictment was unsealed, Villagomez, then Commerce Secretary James Santos, and his wife, Joaquina Santos (Villagomez's sister), had presented themselves to the FBI.

The indictment charged Villagomez, the Santos couple, and former CUC executive director Anthony Guerrero of conspiring to bilk the CNMI government out of thousands of dollars through business deals involving needless purchases of Rydlyme, a cleaning and de-scaling chemical, for CUC.

It turned out that on Aug. 8, three days before the hearing, Guerrero had already been taken to court where he pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy after striking an agreement with the prosecution.

An FBI agent said the investigation into the conspiracy required an extensive search of purchase orders and government records obtained with subpoenas, reaching back a full decade.

Villagomez, represented by three lawyers—David J. Lujan, Brien Sers Nicholas and Joey San Nicolas—and the Santos couple pleaded not guilty. All were released after posting bail.

Villagomez

San Nicholas later withdrew from the case. After a week, Santos resigned as Commerce Secretary.

Despite calls by some lawmakers and other people from the community to either resign or take a leave, Villagomez has continued to hang on to his position. For him, "it's business as usual, and is always business as usual."

Villagomez and co-defendants later bombarded the court with multiple motions, including a motion to dismiss.

Villagomez, through counsel Lujan, asserted, among other things, that the charges were fabricated and that the U.S. government's conduct in bringing the charges against him was "outrageous."

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson heard the motions on Dec. 11. Munson denied all the motions.

As all pre-trial motions are now done, people are waiting for the Lt. Governor's next move as the March 23, 2009, jury trial is fast approaching.

Kumho Asiana holds tight against declining economy

By KRISTI EATON
Kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

It was touted as the deal of the year in 2007, and while Kumho Asiana has followed through with all their promises, it has been a struggle as the South Korea-based company deals with a declining economy both here and there.

In 2007, Kumho acquired the sprawling LaoLao Bay Golf Resort property in Kagman with plans to build a $60-million resort. With that investment, the company would add additional flights to Saipan to back up the investment.

"The CNMI is truly blessed that Kumho Asiana is committed to expanding its investment here. This is the type of investment we need to revive our economy, the type that will help bring more investments," Gov. Benigno Fitial said in 2007.

But the Korean won took a huge hit this year, making investments more expensive and slowing travel for Korean citizens.

The $60 million Gold Resort's completion date was pushed back from mid-2009 to the end of 2009.

Yun Kim, president of the company, said raising funds for the investment has been difficult.

"As you know, the big issue is fundraising," he said in November.

But despite the hardships, the company unveiled the resort's renovated clubhouse in December, the first step to completing the resort.

"If this golf resort succeeds, as I fully expect it will, the CNMI will also experience success and benefit from the success of this multi-million dollar venture. The project's success, however, is a long-term undertaking, one that will be fully realized beyond the immediate financial volatility in today's world markets," Fitial said during remarks at the clubhouse's opening.

Some lawmakers thought the CNMI was giving Kumho too many breaks with the $18 million in tax incentives the company will receive under the qualifying certificate program.

The House of Representatives in November adopted a resolution asking the Commonwealth Development Authority to deny a request for more benefits.

A resolution that Fitial said was, "an attempt to sabotage the CNMI's economic recovery efforts during a time of global financial crisis."

As part of Kumho Asiana's investment in the CNMI, the company substantially increased the flights to and from Korea. There are a total of 18 flights to and from Korean now, although like with Laolao, Asiana has seen the won impact the market.

Through October of this year, Asiana lost $5 million on the Saipan-Korea flight, said Kwang Joong Kim, general manager for Asiana Airlines' Saipan sales office.

In November, the load factor was approximately 55 percent, compared to nearly 85 percent during the same period last year. Asiana had anticipated an 80-percent load factor for the flights, allowing for as many as 43,000 additional visitors each year to the CNMI.

The CNMI saw Korean tourism numbers fall from 11,227 in January of this year to 8,909 in November. Also, hurting the CNMI was the fact that the Korean government issued a communiqué requesting its citizens not to travel out of the country in order to reduce cash outflow and to help stabilize the won against foreign currencies.

However, Asiana has kept its word and has added flights to and from Osaka, Japan, which brings the number of Asiana flights to 21.

The first of the thrice-weekly service arrived in December and had a total of 170 passengers on the 177-seat plane.

"This is another Asiana service coming to the CNMI. Because of our Laolao Bay investment we inaugurated this flight. We hope we will bring a lot more Japanese tourists from Osaka. I'm very happy to have almost 95 percent load factor in the inaugural flight. We hope we do good," Kwang Joong Kim said.

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A busy year for crime and mayhem

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As the economy tanked, so did peace and order. The CNMI saw a spike in criminality in 2008, witnessing an increase burglary cases, alarming robbery incidents, and deadly vehicular accidents that claimed the lives of nine people. It was also the period when the community saw the first case of murder inside a school campus.

In many burglary cases, the most common items stolen were laptops, jewelries, and DVD players. Aside from schools and commercial establishments, many cars were burglarized. Even gallons of diesel were stolen from tractors at the Saipan Mayor's Office's Field Operations Shop. But the most stunning case was the burglary at San Jose Church where a safe containing money was stolen.

The year was greeted with six armed robbery cases, all occurring on Saipan in January. In most cases, the suspects were wearing masks. The victims were poker arcades, tourists, stores, and alien workers walking on the streets.

The robbers struck only once in February, but resumed operations in March. One robber even staged a broad daylight heist at a poker arcade in Sadog Tasi on Good Friday. A 78-year-old man who was sitting outside his home was also robbed.

It was a busy year for robbers as they continued with their mayhem until December. Police, however, busted some suspects, including juveniles.

The entire CNMI community was stunned in November when Efren Ballesteros, a security guard at the Marianas High School in Susupe, was found murdered and robbed inside the MHS campus. The schoolrooms were also burglarized. It took only a couple of days for police to arrest all three juvenile suspects.

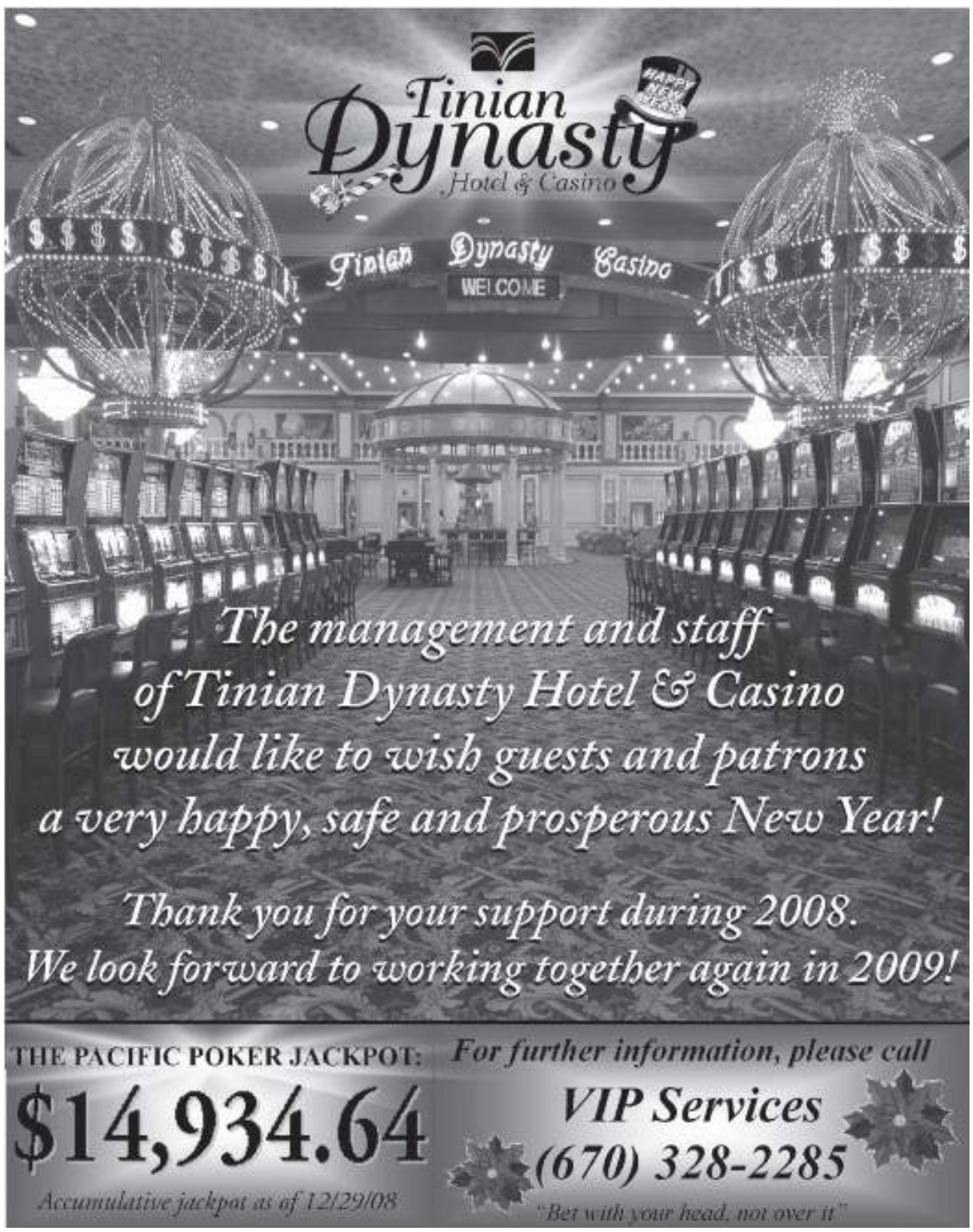
It was also in November when three persons died and one was injured when their car slammed into a power pole in front of the Joeten Kiyu Public Library in Susupe.

After two weeks, a woman died and her husband was injured when the car they were driving swerved along Beach Road and slammed into a concrete fence of a residential compound in Oleai. The woman, a Korean, became the 9th fatality in vehicular accidents in the CNMI for the year.

NEWSMAKERS

From Page 2

United Workers Movement, which has been at the forefront of efforts to grant a legitimate immigration status to long-term alien workers, immediate relative of Freely Associated States and U.S. citizens, and all others who may be affected when the federal government takes over local immigration in June 2009. Calling herself an advocate for workers' rights, Tantiado has also taken on issues critical to the CNMI's population of foreign workers such as the needs of foreign parents with children who have disabilities and the failure of some local insurance companies to pay workers money they are owed through surety bonds. Working in tandem or separately with Wendy Doromal, Jerry Custodio, and other labor activists, Tantiado has continued to lobby key lawmakers and officials in the CNMI for workers' interests.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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 1, 2003

Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona: Saipan Tribune's Person of the Year

He is no conqueror like Napoleon Bonaparte. But despite the burdensome responsibility of leading his people recover from two major disasters, Rota Mayor Benjamin Manglona-a 64-year-old man who has undergone triple bypass operation-displayed strong will and true grit to get Rota back to its feet. "We are down, but we have hope," Manglona said, following supertyphoon Pongsona's onslaught on the island, telling his constituents that there's life beyond the teeming darkness that has plagued Rota for days. The mayor also raised hopes that-with all the assistance extended by federal and local government agencies and the private sector-the island could recover from the devastation of Pongsona within six months.

Two whips of nature in 2002

Rota received two knockout punches this year: typhoon Chata'an and supertyphoon Pongsona left the island a total wreck by yearend. Rota residents and their leaders, however, don't sulk over the calamities they get from Mother Nature; they look at disasters as lessons where they can learn valuable lessons from, and as challenges that are meant to make a stronger community out of them. The island's leaders, led by Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona, saw these challenges as an opportunity to unite the community in asserting what it deserves from the federal government: Nothing special actually-just the same thing Guam, which was also badly hit, is getting.

January 1, 2004

CNMI Volunteers: Saipan Tribune's Person of the Year

They work long, odd hours without pay. They get called up in the middle of the night, very early in the morning, and most of the time smack dab in the middle of their days off—the only time of day that they could truly call their own. They slave away for most of the time without the recognition that they rightfully deserve. And they do all this with a cheerful smile, a delighted laugh, and a self-deprecation that says they'd rather work behind the scene-unknown, inconspicuous, and truly effective. They are the CNMI's volunteers and this year, the *Saipan Tribune* has chosen them to be its Person of the Year. Volunteering, after all, exemplifies the highest ideals of service to the community and, by extension, the world. It is the helping hand in Luke 10:25-37, when Jesus narrated the parable of the Good Samaritan in response to a question on who our neighbors are. It is putting into vigorous action John F. Kennedy's call to arms when he exhorted all Americans to ask not what their country can do for them but what they can do for their country. It is seeing what needs to be done and actually rolling up one's sleeves to do it.

CHC Volunteers Association

CHC Volunteers Association They achieve what they want and they deliver. This makes the Commonwealth Health Center Volunteers Association a highly esteemed organization in the CNMI community. It may be the essence of knowing exactly who they are, why they exist, and what they need to do. Two months before the opening of the CHC facility in Nov. 1986, CHC Volunteers was formed with the clear mission of helping CHC improve the quality of health care in the CNMI by focusing on raising funds. Their collective efforts have been tremendous, from providing the hospital with pillowcases, bed sheets, microwave ovens and television sets, to purchasing major equipment for medical treatment. The CHC Volunteers has proven to be astoundingly dependable.

January 1, 2005

US military ships to aid in relief efforts

A U.S. carrier battle group steamed toward Indonesia's Sumatra island Friday to spearhead an unprecedented multinational military effort to assist the survivors of last weekend's quake and tsunamis. Naval ships prepositioned on Saipan reportedly left the island to join the relief mission in Thailand. The Associated Press reported that another U.S. marine strike group was sailing westward from the Pacific territory of Guam for the seas off Sri Lanka to buttress the burgeoning global drive to bring water and medical supplies to millions of increasingly desperate people. The AP report also said naval ships from Singapore and Australia were prepared to sail yesterday for Aceh, Sumatra's northernmost province and the area closest to the epicenter of the quake.

Marine monument plan proves divisive for NMI

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

One of the CNMI's most precious possessions—the three northernmost islands of Maug, Asuncion and Uracas—divided the CNMI community in 2008, following a proposal to make these specks of land a national marine conservation area.

The plan is for President Bush to designate the three uninhabited islands and the waters surrounding them as a national marine monument, making it off-limits to commercial fishing and mineral exploration. The area teems with life and as yet to be discovered new species of marine creatures.

The issue became a hot item not only in the political arena but also in radio and television talk shows, in coffee shops, private offices, at public forums and at homes. Articles and comments and even editorial items hit the front pages of publications, not only on Saipan but also in the U.S. mainland.

President Bush is set to decide whether to approve or reject the proposal before he turns over the White House to President-elect Barack Obama on Jan. 20. That leaves Bush just 19 days from today to make the decision.

First Lady Laura Bush is supporting the project while Vice President Dick Cheney is on the other side of the fence. The Pew Charitable Trusts has been spearheading the campaign in the CNMI, with Pew manager Matt Rand saying the marine monument would bring much media attention from all over the world and create jobs for many local residents.

In October, Bush sent to Saipan his representative, James Connaughton, chair of the Council for Environmental Quality, to get an update and feedback on the issue. Connaughton made an aerial view of the islands and met with different sectors of the community, including top government officials.

Opposition

At home, government leaders including Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and most members of the Legislature oppose the ambitious plan. In a letter to Pew project director Jay Nelson, Fitial said that, although he appreciates Pew's interest in the CNMI, "the government must fully consider all options and decide carefully, prudently, and strategically."

The debates on the pros and cons of the project gave birth to the project's most ardent supporter, the Friends of the Monument. The group launched a signature campaign and claimed to have garnered some 6,000 supporters for the plan. The CNMI has a voting population of 10,000.

The group's vice chair, former congressman Andrew Salas, even went to Washington D.C. to ask Bush to further widen the scope of the project. He said the group wants the CNMI proposed national marine monument to be even bigger than the 140,000 square miles monument that was established in Hawaii.

At the House of Representatives, a resolution calling on Bush to drop the proposal had been adopted. House Speaker Arnold Palacios has strongly spoken out against it.

The lawmakers believe that such monument will limit access to these islands to researchers and tourists and fear that it will eventually exclude a majority of the people of the CNMI and their descendants from access to this area.

"The people of the CNMI have a strong affinity with these islands and its surrounding waters, and have a deep sense of its connection to the culture, traditions and the unique identity of their people," the resolution stated.

The Senate unanimously adopted the resolution earlier.

The lawmakers argued that there has been little dialogue between the U.S. and CNMI governments on the proposal.

Representatives Tina Sablan, Heinz Hofschneider, and Edward Salas voted against the resolution. Sablan argued that there is no rush to make the designation, and that the government and the community can negotiate the terms of the declaration if they so choose.

The Friends of the Monument insists that the marine monument proposal is an opportunity for the Commonwealth to be known for its environmental contribution to the world.

In an open letter to Bush, The Friends of the Monument said it acknowledges that people of the CNMI and the world have historically relied on the oceans for food and other resources; however, the group believes that the need for continued availability of precious, limited marine resources does not conflict with conservation.

But Department of Public Lands Secretary John S. Del Rosario said that creating the monument is just like "surrendering a precious possession that our ancestors have inherited to us."

'Protectionist' approach

During the 10th Micronesian Chief Executive' s Summit in Pohnpei, the top leaders of the region have asked President George W. Bush to reject the proposal.

"While the merits of the specific designation are debatable, the process is unacceptable to all of our people," states the letter, signed by FSM President Emanuel Mori, Guam Gov. Felix Camacho, Palau Pres. Tommy E. Remengasau, Marshall Islands President Litokwa Tomeing, Yap Gov. Sebastian Anefal, Pohnpei Gov. John Ehsa, Kosrae Gov. Robert Weilbacher, Chuuk Gov. Wesley Simina, and Fitial.

The Micronesian leaders believe that they have already voluntarily committed to the Palau government-led Micronesian Challenge, which calls to preserve 30 percent of near shore resources by 2020.

The leaders argued that they can preserve "our own environment and natural resources without undue interference from wealthy, influential groups and bureaucrats from Washington, D.C."

Lawmakers in Guam have also expressed their opposition, saying the federal government is pursuing the issue "without either recognizing the indigenous native classification for descendants of CNMI inhabitants or providing an avenue for Guam's self-determination process."

The Guam lawmakers reiterated their belief that the islands of Micronesia are all communities that draw their economic livelihood, spiritual well-being and civic strength from their God-given, tropical ocean-based environments.

Bush's proposal, they said, offers a protectionist and preservationist approach instead of sustainable use approach.

Revenue generator

Chuck Sayon, who is currently the interim executive director of the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance and is a former American Memorial Park manager, said that at face value, the park monument is an important refuge for endangered fish species, scientific study and an exotic remote tourist destination.

"Ecosystem preservation and management easily identifies the direct benefits to community and Planet Earth, but does one realize the important indirect benefits to businesses and the local economy?" he asked.

He said that with a projected Fiscal Year 2029 Marianas National Marine Monument budget of $12 million, this translates into a staff payroll of approximately $5 million, and with the rest of the expenditures going to construction and maintenance projects.

"So in a nutshell, the Marianas Marine National Monument acts as an anchor to the scientific community, the Commonwealth's marine education programs and the small but ever growing adventure tourist industry in Pagan," Sayon noted.

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R08-019F	2005	COROLLA 4DR	AUTO	41092	WHITE	ACD-346	10,799	
R08-023F	2007	COROLLA 4DR	AUTO	29549	RED	ACE-780	14,999	
R08-011F	2007	YARIS 4DR	AUTO	65940	SILVER	ACC-154	11,399	
R08-008F	2006	CAMRY LE 4DR	AUTO	18576	BEIGE	ADN-161	15,999	
R08-020F	2006	CAMRY LE 4DR	AUTO	50052	RED	ADO-831	15,999	
U08-043P	2000	CELICA 2DR	MANUAL	72097	BLUE	ABZ-838	7,999	
R08-021F	2005	MATRIX BASE	AUTO	68931	RED	ACD-510	9,999	
GM CARS								
R08-014F	2006	AVEO 4DR.	AUTO	33945	WHITE	ADS-642	9,999	
R07-013F	2005	AVEO HATCHBACK	AUTO	39164	ORANGE	ADO-022	~~9,599~~	6,899
R07-034F	2005	OPTRA 4DR.	AUTO	14592	SILVER	ACD-020	~~10,999~~	9,499
LEXUS								
U08-067P	1995	LEXUS LS400	AUTO	24762	WHITE	ABS-062	11,399	
R08-003F	2003	LEXUS LS430	AUTO	54477	IVORY	ADU-502	~~29,999~~	26,899
TOYOTA TRUCKS								
R07-038F	2004	TACOMA 4X2 XTRACAB	AUTO	49609	BEIGE	ABV-159	~~11,899~~	10,599
OTHER CARS & TRUCKS								
U07-106P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX 4DR	AUTO	53147	SILVER	ADF-401	~~8,999~~	7,999
U07-107P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX 4DR	AUTO	48755	SILVER	ADF-421	~~8,999~~	7,999
U07-034T	2000	NISSAN MAXIMA GXE 4DR.	AUTO	68648	WHITE	ACT-812	~~10,999~~	8,399
U07-104T	2003	NISSAN MURANO SE	AUTO	32000	PEWT	ABZ-615	~~16,799~~	15,299
U08-038T	2001	MITS MONTERO WGN	AUTO	93155	BEIGE	CVS-88	7,999	
U07-095T	1999	MAZDA MILLENIA 4DR.SEDAN	AUTO	91014	BEIGE	ABP-583	~~7,999~~	4,899
GM VAN								
R08-017F	2003	EXPRESS VAN	AUTO	117560	WHITE	BUS-1077	9,499	
SPORT UTILITY								
U07-050T	2002	RAV4 4DR 4WD	AUTO	39182	WHITE	ABW-677	~~13,699~~	12,799

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Aim for a better cease-fire

In launching airstrikes on the Gaza Strip, Israel has exercised its right to self-defense. Since the collapse Dec. 19 of a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian movement that controls the territory, residents of southern Israel have been terrorized by cross-border rocket attacks. When the Bush administration sympathized with Israel's response to that provocation, it wasn't simply catering to pro-Israel sentiments in this country; it was placing blame where it belongs.

Still, as Prime Minister Ehud Olmert must have expected, an air campaign aimed at tunnels and rocket batteries has killed dozens of innocent civilians while inviting—at least in the short term—more attacks on Israel than occurred before the operation. The longer this campaign goes on, the more disproportionate Israel's actions will seem. Israel must desist as soon as it has neutralized the threat of rocket attacks, either through its own actions or as the result of a new and more robust cease-fire of the kind being pursued by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Israeli leaders have sent mixed signals about whether the country has larger ambitions. Defense Minister Ehud Barak has spoken of an "all-out war against Hamas and its kind," while other officials have suggested that the campaign aims only to neutralize Hamas' capacity to threaten Israeli civilians. Aside from the additional carnage it would cause, an attempt to uproot Hamas would damage the already moribund peace process—and without removing Hamas from the political equation.

When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, routing Palestinians who had established a state within a state, some Israelis thought the Palestine Liberation Organization would expire. In fact, even in exile, PLO leader Yasser Arafat retained the loyalty of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Eventually, after years of exasperating equivocation, Arafat recognized the reality of the Jewish state.

Might Hamas undergo a similar evolution? Officially, the movement refuses to acknowledge Israel's legitimacy (much as the PLO once did), offering Israel only a "hudna," or 10-year truce. But some Hamas officials have suggested that the group would agree to plans that implicitly recognize Israel's right to exist, such as a Saudi Arabian initiative calling for Israel to return to its pre-1967 borders.

Until Hamas explicitly recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism, it cannot be Israel's partner in negotiations on a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the past, however, Israel pragmatically has agreed through intermediaries to practice restraint if Hamas did. If, as the result of this operation, a more reliable cease-fire can be negotiated, Israel should consider that a victory.

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The seduction of blind force

By GERSHOM GORENBERG
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

A sewage reservoir in the northern Gaza Strip was in danger of bursting, my morning paper reported last week. The sewage couldn't be pumped to new filtration ponds because of power shortages caused by Israeli restrictions on fuel supplies to the Hamas-ruled territory. If heavy rain—or a stray rocket—cracked the reservoir's earthen sides, a flood of filth would threaten lives and poison the surrounding land. The Haaretz reporter got the story by phone. For security reasons, Israel doesn't let its journalists enter Gaza.

Today, that story seems like a memory from another age, when one could still worry about merely potential disasters. Since then, a different kind of dam has collapsed completely, one that held back fury and fire. As I write, the death toll in Gaza from Israeli bombardment has topped 300. Palestinian rocket fire, intended indiscriminately for civilians, is reaching wider areas of Israel than in the past. Rumors say a ground invasion of Gaza is near. Friends whose sons have received reserve call-ups talk in worried whispers.

Yet that week-old report from Gaza is a clue to how we reached the current crisis. It hints, obliquely, at the blind trust that leaders on both sides put in force, and at their inability to imagine correctly how their enemies will respond to their actions.

Israelis see little of life in Gaza. A story on a dangerously weak reservoir was a rare and fragmentary glimpse. Israeli journalists can report on the far side of the Earth more easily than on that slice of territory 40 miles from Tel Aviv. Besides that, each side in a conflict is concerned with its own suffering. The other's pain is at the very edge of peripheral vision.

During the six-month "calm," or cease-fire, between Israel and Hamas, we knew that rockets were still being fired sporadically from Gaza into southern Israel, violating the agreement. Yet for Gazans, what mattered was that they continued to live under siege conditions, with the supply of goods into the territory tightly controlled. As far as Hamas was concerned, Israel's clampdown on Gaza's borders was also breaking the deal. Because the cease-fire was based on unwritten "understandings," which each side understood differently, it's difficult to judge that claim.

After six months—on Dec. 19—Hamas declared that the cease-fire had expired. It concluded that Israelis understood force only. With intensive rocket fire, the organization's leaders apparently believed, they would push Israel to agree to improved conditions—lifting the blockade, extending the cease-fire to the West Bank.

For angry people, force is seductive. It would have taken only a few moments of thought to predict that no Israeli politician would want to show weakness, to lift the siege because of rockets hitting Israeli towns—especially a few weeks before an election.

Instead, the triumvirate of Israeli leaders—Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Ehud Barak—decided to unleash the air campaign against Gaza, in all likelihood to be followed by a ground offensive. Our leaders, it seems, also have been seduced by force. At the least, they expect that the onslaught will persuade Hamas to stop attacks against Israel. More likely, they have the same hopes for the military campaign as they had for the siege: that it will turn the Palestinians of Gaza against Hamas. Again, a brief effort to assume the other side's perspective leads to the opposite conclusion: Palestinians—in Gaza and in the West Bank—will blame Israel, not Hamas, for the bloodshed.

It is possible that Israel's attacks on government institutions, including the police, will weaken Hamas' control or even shatter the regime in Gaza. But will that benefit Israel? The most likely result will be chaos, a version of Somalia on our border. There will be no one to stop factions that are even more radical than Hamas from firing rockets. If Israel's army reoccupies Gaza, it will be the target of a new guerrilla campaign. Three months from now, we may long for the control that Hamas exerted. Our leaders are right that a country must defend itself. But while choosing a military option, they've failed to persuasively define limited, achievable goals.

Before they chose blunt instruments, each side had better choices. In November, Egypt proposed a compromise to end the Palestinian political split between Hamas and Fatah, Gaza and the West Bank. The deal would have created a coalition government under Palestinian President (and Fatah leader) Mahmoud Abbas, Israel's chosen negotiating partner, for several months before new elections in both parts of Palestinian territory. With Gaza part of Abbas' fiefdom, Israel politically would have had a harder time maintaining the blockade. But Hamas rejected the deal, apparently because of internal divisions.

Israel had mirror-image options while the cease-fire, however shaky, was in place. It could have passed the message that it was willing to recognize a Palestinian unity government and end the siege. Hamas would have faced domestic pressure to moderate its positions and work with Abbas.

Instead, our leaders kept hoping that the siege would provoke an uprising against Hamas.

Now the diplomatic choices are much more difficult. Captured by fury, afraid most of all of appearing weak and inviting worse aggression, each side is unable to back off. The flood has been released.

Gershom Gorenberg is the author of The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967-1977 *(Times Books). He blogs at southjerusalem.com.*

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Cruising on air

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC (www.bizresults.org). They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.

What gets 106 miles to the gallon, can go 90 miles per hour, has a range of 1,000 miles, and can use vegetable oil as its fuel? It's not anything that's rolling on the streets of Saipan right now, but if New York-based Zero Pollution Motors gets its way, people in the U.S. may be driving an air car within a year.

We wanted to start the year off with a light article, so we're going to tell you about the air car. We first became aware of the vehicle after doing some research about a year ago, and I was fascinated by the concept of using compressed air to power a vehicle. Using compressed air to move a piston is as old as the steam locomotive. The concept was developed by MDI, a Luxembourg based manufacturer, and they were working with Tata Motors, India's largest automaker, to further develop and refine the air-concept technology and develop an inexpensive and eco-friendly vehicle.

The car that is planned for India is a six-seat version that can be used as a taxi. That version uses only air that is compressed at 4,500 pounds per square inch as its fuel (more than 120 times the pressure that you put in your car tires), and it's placed in a large tank beneath the passengers. I know, you're probably asking if it's safe to be sitting on top of enough compressed air to shoot you to the top of Mount Topachau? Apparently the air bladder is built to tear apart and not explode if it is ruptured. I don't know how reassuring that is, but you've also got to consider that you now sit on top of 10-20 gallons of very flammable gasoline.

One interesting point about the cars in India is that the exhaust from the engine is cold air that can be routed into the ventilation system of the car to provide air conditioning (try doing that with your V8 gas guzzler).

India's safety requirements aren't as stringent as the U.S., and so cars made there couldn't be shipped to the U.S. to be sold. However, Zero Pollution Motors, a New York-based firm is the first to obtain a license from MDI to produce the cars in the United States, and they have a plan to start selling the air car by the end of 2009, or the beginning of 2010. The cars are supposed to be priced less than $18,000. Their cars will have a small internal combustion engine, not to power the car directly, but to act as a heater. This heated air would increase the air volume and give the cars greater power and distance, while still letting them get over 100 mpg.

The cars internal combustion engine wouldn't kick in until they're going over 35 mph. Since almost all of Saipan's speed limits are at or under 35 mph, and we have short distances to travel, we could probably do without the internal combustion engine, and then just route the cold exhaust into the passenger compartment for a cool ride.

To fill the cars is pretty simple. They have a built in compressor that you can plug in overnight, and when you need it the next morning, it's good to go. In the U.S., there will also be air stations with huge tanks of compressed air that will be used to fill'er up. This would only take a few minutes and cost about $3.

Air cars seem ideal for our situation. The price is low, it's eco-friendly, and you could buzz around the island for about a week before having to plug it in. However, if wishes were fishes we'd all be catching our limit on Saipan. Until an entrepreneur decides they can make a buck shipping them here for resale, this article is just blowing hot air.

While we're waiting for the first air car to make it across the ocean, there are some things we can do to reduce our addiction to the fossil-based fuels. Thankfully, the prices have come down from the stratosphere, and Shell needs to be commended for being the one to take the initiative every single time there is a price reduction.

One tip is to brake less. Each time you step on the brakes you have to eventually step on the accelerator. Look ahead and pace yourself to get the most out of your accelerations. When you do accelerate, press on the gas gradually instead of driving with a lead foot.

Try to drive when it is less congested. Someone from a big city will laugh that we even think we have traffic congestion, but it does take longer and more gas to get somewhere with the constant start, stop, and idle.

Keep your tires inflated properly, get a tune-up, and combine your trips into town and that will help you get more mileage with each fill-up.

Letters to the Editor

Closure of 2008

President-elect Obama continues to reiterate his campaign message of "Change We Can Believe In". Such change should descend upon the country beginning on Jan. 20, 2009, the day of his inauguration.

But when new national leadership begins to utter the same tired old rhetoric of change that means more of the same, then the transfer of power is about the only change that is forthcoming.

Taxpayers across the country are outraged at the bailout plan that involves billions of their own money. Is it right to emplace on the shoulders of our children a huge debt they have nothing to do with at the outset? Why would they be forced to pay for the excesses and failure of auto companies? Call it a humongous preparation at debt paying by our innocent children for the next half a century!

■ ■ ■

Two U.S. senators have raised various questions on the McPhee Report. Their concerns are on economic assumptions, people interviewed for their views on the unintended consequences of USPL 110-229.

It's obvious who the questions came from, all aimed at discrediting the work of two professionals in order to retain federalization contrary to the consent of governance. It should be noted that a staffer of the U.S. Congress or administration must not be given carte blanche authority to unilaterally decide what's good for the NMI. What warped sense of democracy that hails from without rather than directly from governance.

Failed US policies here over the last three decades isn't necessarily all the fault of the federal government. I say this because of its lack of expertise as a colonial power. Great Britain is the only colonial authority that succeeded in the successful development of self-government, i.e., turnover of Hong Kong. That the NMI isn't part of mainstream America exacerbates the unintended though persistent veil of neglect all these years.

It was only last year that we had the privilege to vote for, yes, a non-voting delegate. But then as a continuing student of government, I quiz whatever happened to equal representation inherent in one of our country's sacred documents.

■ ■ ■

I've taken stock of efforts to reduce the size of government, including downsizing the current bicameral to a unicameral legislative system. The quickest way to achieve this is via an amendment to specific Covenant agreement provision repealing that section altogether. And it is the right thing to do given the persistent decline in the NMI's annual revenue.

■ ■ ■

Under a republican form of government, we have three equal branches of government. One can't exert its authority over the other. In the instant case, I strongly beg of the court to stick to the interpretation of laws so it stays constitutional. It can't sway to the right or left. It must remain constitutional.

■ ■ ■

May you all have a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

John S. DelRosario Jr.
As Gonno

Please don't stop the music!

This is an open letter to Mr. Noli Santos, director of the Filipino choir at Kristo Rai Church: This morning someone called my attention to a letter written by you that appeared in the *Saipan Tribune* titled "Discrimination in church." I must tell you that it was one of the saddest letters I have ever seen in any of our local papers.

Since you mention in your letter that several people witnessed the incidents that you relate in your letter, I have no reason to doubt the truth of what you describe. Please, *please* believe me when I tell you and the members of your choral group that what those few people said and did to you is NOT what we, the congregation of Kristo Rai parish, think about you. We think that what all of you have been doing for us, week after week, during Mass at Kristo Rai, is *beautiful*! I have been going to Kristo Rai Church since I first got to the island in October 1974, and I've never heard better singing. I hope that counts for something! Besides, you and your colleagues have every right to be there and to participate along with all the rest of us.

Except for the fact that I have more than once come up to one or the other of your group to thank them for their singing at Mass, I haven't often spoken publicly about your singing… which I always enjoy.

I believe I have a *right* to say that, because I wager that I have more experience in singing liturgical music than anyone else on this island. Truly! I first began singing in a "men's church choir" as a boy soprano in 1934. (Among other things, I learned to sing Gregorian chant.) In the next 10 years or so, as my voice changed, I moved from soprano to alto, and later I also sang (sequentially) tenor, baritone and even bass. Eventually, I sang in a men's church chorale as a tenor, and as a soloist at midnight Mass and on special occasions. I also learned to sing all of the celebrant's parts for a Latin "high Mass". So when I say that I have had a lot of experience singing church music, I know what I am talking about.

I can tell you that the singing you and your chorale do at Kristo Rai church is *good music*, believe me. It is!

And we appreciate it. So please don't let what one or two or three people have said to you make you feel you should stop singing at Kristo Rai. *We like* you. We appreciate what you have been doing for us every week. We want you to stay, and to keep singing at Kristo Rai. Please do!

Leonard J. Kaufer, Ph.D.
San Vicente/Dandan, Saipan

Xenophobia

No doubt you and I have heard many Chamorros and statesiders who derogatorily refer to FSMers and Chuukese as inferior (dirty) human beings. When Mr. Vic Cepeda (who was the principal of MHS) made a similar, unforgivable statement in my presence years ago, he probably did not know I was a Mortlockese-Chuukese/American. Apparently, xenophobia and racism are here to stay for many, many years to come, unless we all work together to eliminate them somehow from the hearts and minds of certain individuals.

Sapuro Rayphand
via e-mail

Nonsense!

This is in response to Lee Anderson, who wrote on Tuesday that because Tina Sablan has not taken on the shortcomings of some members of the Legislature, she has "given up."

Nonsense!

In the first place, isn't that setting unrealistically high standards for someone—especially a freshman legislator? One could ask what the letter writer has done in terms of going after corruption in the CNMI.

In the second place, demanding fiscal accountability is equally important—indeed, is a critical aspect of cleaning up corruption. Tina's pursuit of the source of the governor's funding for a dubious lawsuit is a signal, a warning, that such treatment of government funds is not acceptable.

Tina is also intelligent enough to know better than to beat her head against a wall. She will gain clout and credibility as she wins her battles one by one, which will then give her the authority she needs to take on bigger game.

At the very least, Tina is doing something. Can as much be said most of the others? We should give her credit and support, not tear her down.

Ruth Tighe
Tanapag, Saipan

No reply

To Mr. Alex Rangamar of Horn Lake, MS: I am replying for you to know that I have read your letter addressed to me. I am sorry that I cannot reply in kind right now, because your letter was just a repetition of issues and letters I have already answered. Besides, your arguments were not stimulating enough for me to reach my threshold to speak with my heart.

Good day to you and have a happy and blessed 2009.

Malou H. Berueco
Gualo Rai

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼76°	▲85° ▼75°	▲84° ▼75°	▲85° ▼76°

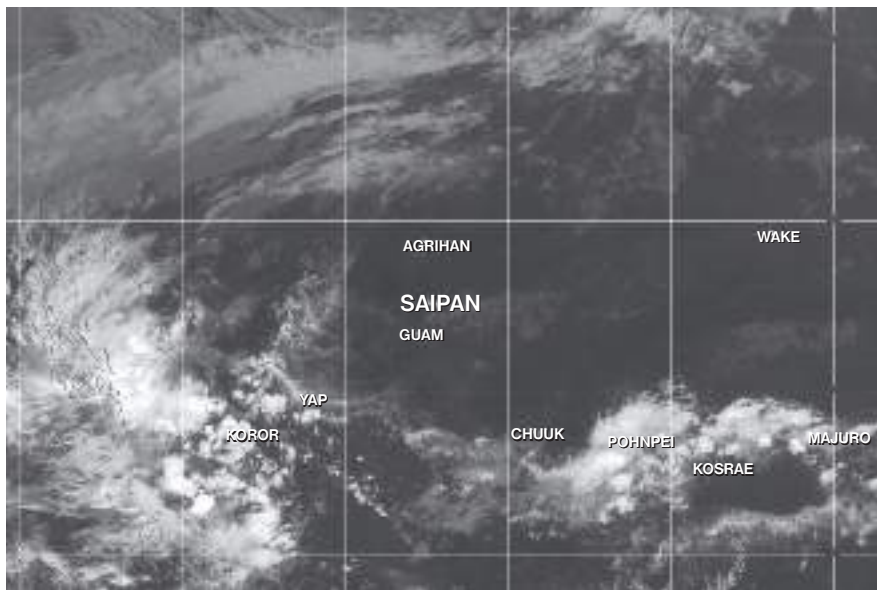
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Sunny	▲84 ▼76
Palau	Rain	▲85 ▼78
Yap	Showers	▲85 ▼77
Chuuk	Rain	▲89 ▼77
Pohnpei	Rain	▲86 ▼76
Kosrae	Rain	▲84 ▼79
Majuro	Rain	▲85 ▼77

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲75 ▼63
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲35 ▼16
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲65 ▼63
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲78 ▼71
London	Cloudy	▲41 ▼32
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲68 ▼48
Manila	Rain	▲80 ▼72
Melbourne	Showers	▲68 ▼45
Miami	Showers	▲76 ▼64
New York	Sunny	▲28 ▼21
Osaka	Rain/Snow	▲42 ▼34
Paris	Sunny	▲38 ▼28
Pusan	Sunny	▲44 ▼25
Rome	Rain	▲49 ▼48
Salem	Rain	▲47 ▼42
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲57 ▼48
Seoul	Sunny	▲32 ▼13
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲46 ▼35
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲38 ▼36

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, WEDNESDAY, DEC. 31, 2008
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A stationary front cuts through the northwest corner of the discussion area from 25N140E to 22N130E. Cloudiness and widespread rain are occurring along and up to 300 miles northwest of the front. A surface trough east of Palau extends northwestward from EQ142E to 16N136E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found within 200 miles of the trough axis north of 7N140E. This area includes Yap. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring southwest of Palau between the equator and 8N from 130E to 134E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found south of Chuuk between 1N and 6N from 144E to 155E. A surface trough southwest of Kosrae runs northeastward from 3N158E to 9N163E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found within 150 miles of the trough. This area includes Pohnpei. Scattered trade-wind showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring between 5N and 9N from 165E to 177E. This area include Kwajalein and Majuro.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:23AM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet
11:23AM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
5:21PM Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
9:56PM Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:43AM	5:58 PM
Friday	6:44AM	5:58 PM
Saturday	6:44AM	5:59 PM
Sunday	6:44AM	6:00 PM
Monday	6:45AM	6:00 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:50AM	9:51 PM
Friday	10:26AM	10:39 PM
Saturday	11:01AM	11:29 PM
Sunday	11:38AM	
Monday	12:18PM	12:21 AM

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  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

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- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

Eric Aguon Cruz

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

At an early age, Eric A. Cruz found out that money indeed can be had even under a pile of trash.

After school, the then 14-year-old Eric always tagged along with his father, the late Jacinto C. Cruz, as he did his rounds for the family's trash collection company, Cruz Sanitation Services. It helped that the daily routine was a unique bonding session between dad and son as well.

The part-time job also instilled in the young Cruz's mind the value of hard work—even if it was hauling someone else's garbage—and it proved handy when he took over Cruz Sanitation Services soon after graduating from Marianas High School in 1986.

Rather than go to college abroad, Eric thought it was best to take the reins of the family business. His motivation: a baby on the way and a burning desire to grow the company his grandfather founded.

When Eric became operations general manager, Cruz Sanitation Services was not doing well as competitors have pirated a large chunk of its clientele.

He soon reorganized the company, restructured how it did business, and soon embarked in getting its old clients back and then some.

Exclusively catering to residential customers before, Eric decided in 1987 to expand to the commercial market and with it the company's earnings grew three-fold.

Aided by the tourism boom in the islands, Cruz Sanitation Services enjoyed a period of prosperity the next 10 years—1988-1997.

It continued until the dawn of the new millennium when competition against other commercial trash collection agencies prompted Eric to change the company's focus toward recycling.

Not only did the company's business model evolved as the passing of Cruz patriarch, Jacinto, in 2002 warranted a change in the company name from Cruz Sanitation Services to Ericco Enterprises LLC.

It was under this new company that Eric entered a joint venture with Guam-based construction company, Maeda Pacific, to form Basula Produkto.

The partnership collects used aluminum softdrink cans, cardboard, plastic, electrical wires, abandoned cars, other metals, and even "white goods"—a term used to describe major household appliances and can also include computer monitors and casings.

Incidentally, Basula Produkto was awarded a 2006 Environmental Award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX in San Francisco, California. It won the award based on its three years' effort to rid Saipan of waste paper, cardboard, metals and plastics.

Aside from getting accolades for the thousands of tons of waste that it shipped off- island—sparing the finite capacity of the Marpi landfill the past six years—Ericco Enterprises and Basula Produkto has also been a rousing business success with gross earnings of $1 million a year.

The company currently employs 80 people at its Lower Base facility.

Now, Eric is already looking forward to enjoying all the fruits of his hard labor by retiring at a relatively young age of 42 years old.

He wants to enjoy the freedom reaped from his financial success that brought him a six-bedroom house and eight cars, comfortable with the thought that his eldest son and heir apparent, Ellery S. Cruz, will dutifully carry on the family business as a fourth generation "trash to cash" businessman.

Ericco Enterprises LLC owner Eric Aguon Cruz with his son Ellery at the company's Lower Base facility.

MARK RABAGO

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STOCK # 4C835957
$14,995.00*

2005 Ford Mustang
STOCK # 55105436
$23,995.00

2004 Honda Element EX 4x4
STOCK # 4L003130
$15,995.00*

2005 Kia Spectra
STOCK # 55151646
$9,995.00*

2001 Honda Prelude
STOCK # 1C005458
$9,995.00*

2006 Nissan Armada 4x4
STOCK # 6N736174
$27,995.00*

2004 Honda Civic LX
STOCK # 4L022357
$12,995.00*

2004 Ford Explorer XLT
STOCK # 4UA51928
$12,995.00*

2005 Honda Civic DX
STOCK # 5L002379
$12,995.00*

2005 Kia Sportage 4x4
STOCK # 57085101
$14,995.00*

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Sales Consultant
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COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
SCHEDULE OF ELECTRIC CHARGES AND RATES
EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2009

*** Pursuant to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission's Decision and Order, Docket 09-1 (Dec. 19, 2008), pp 6-8, the electric fuel rate has been restructured into a levelized energy adjustment clause (LEAC) rate. The Order set the LEAC rate at $0.22989 per kWh effective January 1, 2009. The LEAC rate shall remain in force and effect until revised by order of the Commission. (p 8 para. 6) Other rates and charges shall remain in force and effect until revised by order of the Commission.**

CUSTOMER CLASSIFICATIONS	MONTHLY CUSTOMER CHARGES (FIXED)	RATES PER KILOWATT-HOUR (kWh)		
		ELECTRIC NON-FUEL RATES (FIXED)	*LEAC RATE	TOTAL RATES PER kWh
RESIDENTIAL	$ 5.60			
1. First 500 kWh (1 To 500)		$ 0.016	$0.22989	$ 0.24589
2. Second 500 kWh (501 To 1,000)		0.066	0.22989	0.29589
3. Next 1,000 kWh (1,001 To 2,000)		0.086	0.22989	0.31589
4. All kWh After 2,000 (Over 2,000)		0.127	0.22989	0.35689
COMMERCIAL (All kWh Billed)	$ 7.67	$ 0.086	$0.22989	$ 0.31589
GOVERNMENT (All kWh Billed)	$ 7.67	$ 0.091	$0.22989	$ 0.32089
NON-CONFORMING LOAD (All kWh Billed)	$ 56.00	$ 0.222	$0.22989	$ 0.45189

HISTORY OF ELECTRIC FUEL RATES:

JANUARY 2007	$ 0.196	NOVEMBER 2007 (ALL OTHERS)	$ 0.258
FEBRUARY 2007	$ 0.188	DECEMBER 2007	$ 0.258
MARCH 2007	$ 0.188	JANUARY 2008	$ 0.258
APRIL 2007	$ 0.191	FEBRUARY 2008	$ 0.253
MAY 2007	$ 0.222	MARCH 2008 (RES. ONLY)	$ 0.176
JUNE 2007	$ 0.221	MARCH 2008 (ALL OTHERS)	$ 0.288
JULY 2007	$ 0.223	APRIL 2008 (RES. ONLY)	$ 0.176
AUGUST 2007	$ 0.223	APRIL 2008 (ALL OTHERS)	$ 0.327
SEPTEMBER 2007	$ 0.228	MAY 2008 (RES. ONLY, 5/1 - 2/08)	$ 0.176
OCTOBER 2007 (RES. ONLY, 10/1 - 3/07)	$ 0.228	MAY 2008 (RES. ONLY, 5/3 - 31/08)	$ 0.357
		MAY 2008 (ALL OTHERS)	$ 0.357
OCTOBER 2007 (RES. ONLY, 10/4 - 31/07)	$ 0.176	JUNE 2008	$ 0.387
		JULY 2008	$ 0.413
OCTOBER 2007 (ALL OTHERS)	$ 0.228	AUGUST 2008	$ 0.413
NOVEMBER 2007 (RES. ONLY, 11/1/07)	$ 0.176	SEPTEMBER 2008	$ 0.362
		OCTOBER 2008	$ 0.337
NOVEMBER 2007 (RES. ONLY, 11/2 - 30/07)	$ 0.258	NOVEMBER 2008	$ 0.270
		DECEMBER 2008	$ 0.207

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP 09-007

The CNMI Public School System (PSS) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for Cellular Services, Long Distance Services, TI Circuits to the Islands of Tinian and Rota, Off Island T1 Circuit (s), Basic Network Equipment Maintenance and PBX Equipment Maintenance.

Detailed information on the scope of work will be made available on or after December 18, 2008 at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rdfloor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands during regular PSS working hours. Proposals shall be submitted in a sealed envelope containing one (1) original signed proposal and three (3) copies face marked "PSS RFP 09-007." Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope face marked "RFP 09-007, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" containing one(1) original and three (3) copies. Responsibility documents will not be available for public viewing without the prior consent of the contractor.

All proposals shall be delivered to the PSS Procurement & Supply Office no later than 4:00 p.m., January 19, 2009. Any proposal submitted after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

A pre-submission conference will be held on December 29, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the PSS Board of Education Conference Room located on the 2nd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building. All questions shall be delivered in writing to the PSS Procurement & Supply Officer, Attn: E-Rate (RFP 09-007) or sent via facsimile or e-mail no later than January 6, 2009 at 4:00p.m., local time. Please be advised of the following contact information: Facsimile: 670-664-3791; Email: babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp

PSS reserves the right to award a single or multiple awards, or award multiple parts of this RFP to a single contractor, or to reject any or all proposals or to cancel in whole or in part this solicitation if to do so is in the best interest of PSS.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting, P&S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP 09-005

The CNMI Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for the **Supply of Diesel, Unleaded Gasoline, Lubricating Oil, and Fluids for its School Bus and Vehicle Fleets.**

Detailed information on the scope of work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All proposals shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "RFP 09-005" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than January 07, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "RFP 09-005, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination", containing one (1) original and three (3) copies). Any proposal after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: *babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.*

Contractors are required to submit with their proposal, a copy of their valid business license.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All proposals shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting, P&S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 09-005

The Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, installation, and assembly of **Desktop Computer Systems and Accessories for Hopwood Jr. High School (HJHS)**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 09-005" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office, no later than **January 14, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 09-005" CONFIDENTIAL — Responsibility Determination" (one (I)-original and three (3)-copies). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Juan D. Babauta, Acting, Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: ***babautajd@pss.cnmi.mp.***

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the CNMI Public School System.

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Juan D. Babauta
Acting, Procurement & Supply Officer

Nation

Defiant Ill. governor fills Obama's Senate seat

CHICAGO (AP)—A defiant Gov. Rod Blagojevich on Tuesday named a black political trailblazer to Barack Obama's Senate seat, a surprise move that put the governor's opponents in the uncomfortable position of trying to block his choice from becoming the Senate's only black member. Blagojevich's appointment of former state Attorney General Roland Burris injected race into the drama surrounding the embattled governor, who repeatedly sought to distance his selection from charges that he tried to sell the seat to the highest bidder.

"Please don't allow the allegations against me to taint a good and honest man," the governor said, turning to the smiling 71-year-old standing by his side.

"This is about Roland Burris as a U.S. senator, not about the governor who made the appointment."

■ ■ ■

WASHINGTON (AP)—President-elect Barack Obama says he supports the decision by Senate Democrats to deny his vacated Senate seat to an appointee of embattled Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich. On Tuesday, Blagojevich appointed former Illinois Attorney General Roland Burris. He would be the nation's only black senator.

Burris

Democratic leaders in the Senate are rejecting the appointment, arguing that because of accusations that Blagojevich tried to sell the seat to the highest bidder, any appointment by him would be tainted.

In a statement, Obama called Burris a fine man but said he agreed that the Senate cannot accept an appointment from Blagojevich. Obama repeated his call for Blagojevich to resign and allow the seat to be filled by other means.

■ ■ ■

Burris was the first African-American elected to major statewide office in Illinois, serving as comptroller and running for governor three times—the last time losing to Blagojevich.

He said he has no connection to the charges against Blagojevich, who was arrested earlier this month.

Even before the announcement, which was leaked several hours before, the governor's move ran into opposition.

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, who must certify the appointment, said Tuesday he will not do so. And Senate leaders reiterated that they would not accept anyone appointed by Blagojevich.

In a statement Tuesday, Senate Democrats maintained that Blagojevich should not make the appointment because doing so would be unfair to Burris and to the people of Illinois.

"It is truly regrettable that despite requests from all 50 Democratic senators and public officials throughout Illinois, Gov. Blagojevich would take the imprudent step of appointing someone to the United States Senate who would serve under a shadow and be plagued by questions of impropriety," the statement said.

"Under these circumstances, anyone appointed by Gov. Blagojevich cannot be an effective representative of the people of Illinois and, as we have said, will not be seated by the Democratic caucus."

Senate leaders, who were scattered for the holidays, immediately convened a conference call. Some involved in the call were wary of being seen as denying a black man a seat in a chamber where there are no blacks, according to two officials knowledgeable about the talks who requested anonymity in order to speak freely.

ACROSS THE NATION

Vt. man wins $650K after pulling ticket from trash

BERLIN, Vt. (AP)—A Vermont man is $650,000 richer after retrieving a lottery ticket he had been given for Christmas but accidentally threw away. Steven LeClair of Richford got the ticket for the Dec. 24 Tri-State Megabucks drawing as a gift from his mother. But it was in a gift bag that LeClair threw out, not knowing it was inside. Vermont Lottery spokeswoman Hadley Melendy says LeClair's wife found out two days later that the only winning ticket had been sold at a market in Richford. So LeClair went through the trash at his home and found it. LeClair works for a car dealership and doesn't normally play the lottery. He couldn't be reached for comment Tuesday; his telephone number isn't listed. New Hampshire and Maine also participate in Tri-State Megabucks.

Police: Santa gunman planned to kill more than 9

COVINA, Calif. (AP)—The man who killed nine people at his former in-law's Christmas party while dressed as Santa Claus had plotted the attack several months ago and his hit list was longer than first thought. Police said Monday that Bruce Pardo planned to also kill his mother and his ex-wife's divorce attorney but committed suicide before he could complete the task. Authorities said his plan was thorough and detailed. Pardo had a getaway car, an airplane ticket to the Midwest, several guns and high-powered ammunition sold only outside the state. He launched the attack on Christmas Eve, putting on his Santa Claus suit, arming himself with four guns and barging into a party at his ex-relatives' home. He then killed nine people and torched the home.

Notice of Public Hearing

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Commission, through the CNMI Department of Commerce would like to announce the date and time of general public hearings for the 2009 CNMI Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The hearings will take place on Tinian, Rota, and Saipan at the following venues, dates, and time:

Tinian

January 06, 2009
6:30- 8:00 pm
Tinian Courthouse

Rota

January 07, 2009
6:30- 8:00 pm
The Rota Roundhouse in District 3

Saipan

January 09, 2009
6:30-8:00 pm
The Multi-purpose Center

The purpose of the hearings is to allow for input and feedback on development projects geared towards the economic development of the CNMI. Public feedback is solicited for inclusion in the final CEDS plan.

Please contact the Secretary of Commerce should you have any questions with respect to this hearing at (670) 664-5077.

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World

Obama's election voted top news story of 2008

HAITI FOOD CRISIS AP

In this Nov. 19, 2008 file photo, Venecia Louis, 4, who suffers from malnutrition, is weighed at the Doctors Without Borders hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

NEW YORK (AP)—The epic election that made Barack Obama the first African-American president was the top news story of 2008—followed closely by the economic meltdown that will test his leadership, according to U.S. editors and news directors voting in The Associated Press' annual poll.

The campaign, with subplots emerging throughout the year, received 100 first-place votes out of 155 ballots cast for the top 10 stories. Two other political sagas—the history-making candidacies of Hillary Rodham Clinton and Sarah Palin—also made the list.

The vast economic crisis, plunging the U.S. into recession and ravaging many business sectors worldwide, was the No. 2 story, receiving 49 first-place votes. The precipitous rise and fall of oil prices was No. 3.

The top story of 2007 was the massacre of 32 people at Virginia Tech University by a mentally disturbed student gunman.

Here are 2008's top 10 stories, as voted by AP members:

1. U.S. ELECTION

Obama emerged from Election Night as a decisive victor and a symbol for the world of America's democratic promise. But he reached that point only after a grueling battle with Clinton for the Democratic nomination and then an often-nasty showdown with the McCain/Palin ticket in the run-up to the election.

In this Nov. 4, 2008 file photo, President-elect Barack Obama, left, his wife Michelle Obama, right, and two daughters, Malia, 7. and Sasha, 10, wave at the election night rally in Chicago.

AP

2. ECONOMIC MELTDOWN

The bad news kept coming—collapses of Wall Street giants; huge stock market losses; plummeting home prices and a surge of foreclosures; desperate times for U.S. automakers. It added up to the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, and will cost the federal government well over $1 trillion in various rescue and stimulus packages.

3. OIL PRICES

The global economic angst produced hyper-volatile energy markets. The price of crude soared as high as $150 a barrel in July before crashing to $33 this month. In the U.S., the average price for a gallon of regular gas peaked at $4.11, then plunged below $1.70.

4. IRAQ

The much-debated "surge" of U.S. troops helped reduce violence after more than five years of war, but Iraq is still buffeted daily by bombings, ambushes, kidnappings and political uncertainty. A newly ratified U.S.-Iraqi security agreement sets a timetable for U.S. troop withdrawal by 2012.

5. BEIJING OLYMPICS

China hosted the Olympics for first time, drawing praise for logistical mastery and condemnation for heavy-handed security measures. The games themselves were rated a success, highlighted by the record-shattering performances of swimmer Michael Phelps and sprinter Usain Bolt.

6. CHINESE EARTHQUAKE

A huge quake in May killed 70,000 people in Sichuan province and left 5 million homeless. Many thousands of children were among the victims—authorities said about 7,000 classrooms were destroyed in shoddily built schools.

7. SARAH PALIN

Few Americans outside Alaska knew much about its governor when Republican John McCain picked her as his running mate. That changed rapidly. To her conservative admirers, she was a feisty, refreshing change from most politicians; to her critics, she was in over her head, and worthy of all the lampooning she endured.

8. MUMBAI TERRORISM

Ten attackers allegedly sponsored by a Pakistan-based Islamic group terrorized India's financial capital in November, killing 164 people in coordinated attacks on hotels, markets and a train station. India's perennially uneasy relations with Pakistan were badly strained.

9. HILLARY CLINTON

She didn't win, but Clinton came closer than any other woman in U.S. history to becoming a major party's presidential nominee. Her determined primary campaign, waged vigorously even when it seemed a lost cause, inspired millions of women across the country—and helped persuade Obama to choose her as secretary of state.

10. RUSSIA-GEORGIA WAR

The two nations waged a five-day war in August ignited by a Georgian artillery barrage on the breakaway region of South Ossetia. Russia responded with a drive deep into Georgian territory, causing severe economic damage and aggravating already troubled Russia-US relations.

Stories that almost made the Top 10 included Cyclone Nargis, which killed more than 84,000 people in Myanmar; Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, which wreaked deadly damage in the Caribbean and on the U.S. Gulf Coast; and the seesaw fate of same-sex marriage in California, where a court ruling approving it was later overturned by a ballot measure.

MODERN-DAY JANUS

In this April 8, 2008 file photo, mother Sushma holds her daughter Lali at their residence in Saini Sunpura, 50 kilometers (31 miles) east of New Delhi, India. The baby with two faces, two noses, two pairs of lips and two pairs of eyes was born on March 11 in a northern Indian village, where she is doing well and is being worshipped as the reincarnation of a Hindu goddess, her father said.

AP

Environment

Inventors find inspiration in natural phenomena

By JULIET EILPERIN
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

For some, whale watching is a tourist activity. For Gunter Pauli, it is a source of technological inspiration.

"I see a whale, I see a six-to-12-volt electric generator that is able to pump 1,000 liters per pulse through more than 108 miles of veins and arteries," he said. The intricate wiring of the whale's heart is being studied as a model for a device called a nanoscale atrioventricular bridge, which will undergo animal testing next year and could replace pacemakers for the millions of people whose diseased hearts need help to beat steadily.

Pauli—who directs the Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives (ZERI) Foundation in Geneva—is an unabashed promoter of biomimicry, the science of making technological and commercial advances by copying natural processes. At a time when many are looking for a way to protect Earth's biodiversity and reduce the ecological impact of industrial products and processes, a growing number of business leaders and environmental activists alike are looking to biomimicry as a way to achieve both ends.

"The idea behind biomimicry is that life has already solved the challenges that we're trying to solve," said Janine Benyus, who leads the Biomimicry Guild, a Helena, Mont.-based consulting group. "There are literally as many ideas as there are organisms."

In the past few years, entrepreneurs have developed and started marketing an array of inventions that imitate natural phenomena. For instance, the resurrection plant, a desert species common in Africa and Latin America, dries up and appears to be dead when water is scarce. It does so without breaking its cells' membranes, enabling it to revive when moisture returns. Researchers have learned to make some vaccines with a similar capability so they do not have to be refrigerated. Other inventors are developing friction-free surfaces modeled on the slippery skin of the Arabian Peninsula's sandfish lizard, an advance that could eliminate the use of ball bearings in many products as well as industrial

See INVENTORS on Next Page

THE WASHINGTON POST

Innovators used ultra-fast lasers to imitate the microscopic properties of the surface of a lotus leaf, left, to achieve a self-cleaning, water-repellent surface, right. Biomimicry is the science of making technological and commercial advances by copying natural processes.

Commonwealth 0f the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai
Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW09-IFB-004

REPAIR AND RENOVATION OF PAKPAK BEACH PARK PAVILIONS SAN ANTONIO, SAIPAN

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Repair and Renovation of Pakpak Beach Park Pavilions San Antonio, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after December 19, 2008 at DPW Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor-Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan. A non-refundable payment to one Hundred Dollars **(US$I00.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division. All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001. Bidding procuredures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Preference is available to US Citizens or Permanent Residents as per Public Law 15-95 and as further Amended by Public Law 15-118 and must be submitted with the BID or PROPOSAL if preference is claimed.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on January 06, 2009, I :00 p.m. local time at the project site located at Pakpak Beach Park in San Antonio, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on January 09, 2009 **to Mr. Joseph M. Inos Jr., Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd floor-Joeten Commercial Building Oleai Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW09-IFB-004"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 1:00 p.m. local time January 14, 2009. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 1:00 p.m. local time January 14, 2009, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 14, 2009, and must be received no later than January 23, 2009. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 1 :00 p.m. local time, January 28, 2009, However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 1:00 p.m. local time, on January 19, 2009.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security may be Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive. bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. The surety company providing the Performance and payment bonds must authorized to conduct business in CNMI and possess unencumbered assets equal to the penal amount of each bond.

Performance time for completion of this project is Sixty **(60)** calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at one hundred dollars **(US$100.00)** per working days for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ DIEGO B. SONGSONG
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

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Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW09-IFB-003

PAVEMENT MARKING IN PRECINCT III-CHALAN MONSIGNOR GUERRERO AND CHALAN PALE ARNOLD INTERSECTION, SAIPAN

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Pavement Marking in Precinct ID-Chalan Monsignor Guerrero and Chalan Pale Arnold Intersection, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after December 19, 2008 at DPW Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor-Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan. A non-refundable payment to one Hundred Dollars **(US$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division. All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001. Bidding procuredures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Preference is available to US Citizens or Permanent Residents as per Public law 15-95 and as further **Amended by Public Law 15-118** and must be submitted with the BID or PROPOSAL if preference is claimed.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on January 05, 2009, 9:00 a.m. local time at the project site located at Intersection of Chalan Monsignor Guerrero and Chalan Pale Arnold, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on January 09, 2009 to **Mr. Joseph M. Inos Jr., Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd floor-Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW09-IFB-003"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 13, 2009. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 13, 2009, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 13, 2009, and must be received no later than February 22, 2009. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, January 27, 2009, However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:00 a.m. local time, on January 16, 2009.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security may be Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. The surety company providing the Performance and payment bonds must authorized to conduct business in CNMI and possess unencumbered assets equal to the penal amount of each bond.

Performance time for completion of this project is Thirty **(30)** calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at one hundred dollars **(US$100.00)** per working days for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ DIEGO B. SONGSONG
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

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INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW09-IFB-005

SUPPLY, DELIVERY, AND INSTALLATION OF COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER PERIMETER (SECURITY) FENCE AND GUARD BOOTHS

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Supply, Delivery, and Installation of Commonwealth Health Center Perimeter (Security) Fence and Guard Booths, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands **(CNMI)**.

The project package will be available on or after December 19, 2008 at DPW Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor-Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of One Hundred Dollars **(US$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division. All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill. .

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations NMIAC 70-30.3. Local Preference is not available per grant conditions Homeland Security Grant.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on January 7, 2009, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Commonwealth Health Center Conference Room. Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on January 16, 2009 to **Mr. Joseph M. Inos, Jr., Director** of Technical Services Division, DPW 2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW09-IFB-005"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 22, 2009. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 22, 2009, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 22, 2009, and must be received no later than February 2, 2009. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, February 5, 2009, However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:00 a.m. local time, on January 27, 2009.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. This security may be Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660".

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations NMIAC Section 70-3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price. The surety company providing the Performance and payment bonds must be authorized to conduct business in CNMI. The successful bidder must submit an ICC with such bonds.

Performance time for completion of this project is one hundred Twenty (120) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at one hundred dollars (US$l00.00) per working day for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ DIEGO B. SONGSONG
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ PATRICK J. TENORIO
Special Assistant, Homeland Security

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

Life & Style

Ledger's death voted top 2008 entertainment story

Heath Ledger's death was voted 2008's top entertainment story by U.S. newspaper and broadcast editors surveyed by The Associated Press.

The top 10:

1. HEATH LEDGER DIES

When the Australian actor was found dead Jan. 22 at 28, shock and confusion over the circumstances of his death followed. The autopsy concluded Ledger's death was accidental, the result of a toxic combination of prescription drugs. His legacy continued, though, in a roundly acclaimed performance as the Joker in the year's biggest box office hit "The Dark Knight."

2. WRITERS STRIKE ENDS

The Writers Guild of America took to the picket lines Nov. 5 of last year. The strike played havoc on the industry, from award shows to network TV schedules, and didn't conclude until Feb. 12. When an agreement was finally reached, the Academy Awards were saved and scripted television slowly returned to the airwaves.

3. BOFFO BOX OFFICE FOR "DARK KNIGHT"

As the release of Christopher Nolan's second Batman installment "The Dark Knight" neared, anticipation over Ledger's performance mounted. The film went on to gross $528 million domestically, second all-time only to "Titanic." Unlike most blockbusters, it also appeared on many critics' top 10 lists.

Ledger

4. POLITICAL COMEDY SHINES

The long campaign was highlighted by late-night hosts (David Letterman chastising John McCain for missing his scheduled guest appearance), satire veterans (Tina Fey's Sarah Palin impression on "Saturday Night Live") and new media sensations ("Obama Girl"). "SNL," "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report" all charted their best ratings.

5. BRITNEY SPEARS' DOWNWARD SPIRAL

Though by year's end Spears had rebounded with a new album and successful TV appearances, her 2008 started at a low point. After a custody dispute with Kevin Federline, Spears was hospitalized and held for psychiatric evaluation. The chaos eventually subsided and in November she released the aptly titled album "Circus."

6. PAUL NEWMAN DIES

Newman, one of the most beloved actors of the 20th century, died Sept. 26 at 83 after a fight with lung cancer at his longtime home in Westport, Conn. In the days after, tributes were paid to the charismatic actor in his various worlds: theater, movies, auto racing and philanthropy.

7. TV NETWORKS EMBRACE THE WEB

Online video turned pro in 2008. Networks increasingly embraced the Web, making many of their most popular shows available to stream online. News Corp. and NBC Universal banded together to created Hulu.com, while ABC and CBS continued to beef up their sites.

8. GEORGE CARLIN DIES

The truth-telling comedian—widely considered one of the greatest ever—died June 22 at 71. "He was more than just a comic," said Paul Rodriguez. "His routines became part of the American lexicon."

9. TIM RUSSERT DIES

Reaction to the unexpected June 13 death of Tim Russert at 58 was widespread and felt throughout Washington by Republicans and Democrats. Tom Brokaw delivered the news live on NBC, and would later temporarily take Russert's spot on "Meet the Press." David Gregory recently became the full-time moderator for the show, the longest-running on TV.

10. JENNIFER HUDSON'S FAMILY TRAGEDY

Days after the release of her film "The Secret Life of Bees," tragedy befell the family of the "American Idol" finalist. Her mother, brother and nephew were killed in a shooting at their Chicago home. Police have charged William Balfour, the estranged husband of Hudson's sister Julia, with the murders.

INVENTORS

From Page 17

diamond dust in automobile air bags.

Knowing that the pearl oyster uses carbon dioxide to construct its calcium carbonate shell, a Canada-based company called CO2 Solution developed and patented a technology that converts carbon dioxide emissions into a water-based solution of bicarbonate ions, which can be turned into pure carbon dioxide gas or solid calcium carbonate. The firm has applied the process to cement production, reducing the large amounts of carbon dioxide that process releases.

Oysters "see carbon dioxide as a building material," Benyus said.

The United Nations Environment Program and the International Union for Conservation of Nature have joined the Biomimicry Guild and ZERI to develop a list of Natureís 100 Bestóthe most prominent innovations inspired by natural processes.

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said such technologies will be essential to more sustainable development in light of global warming.

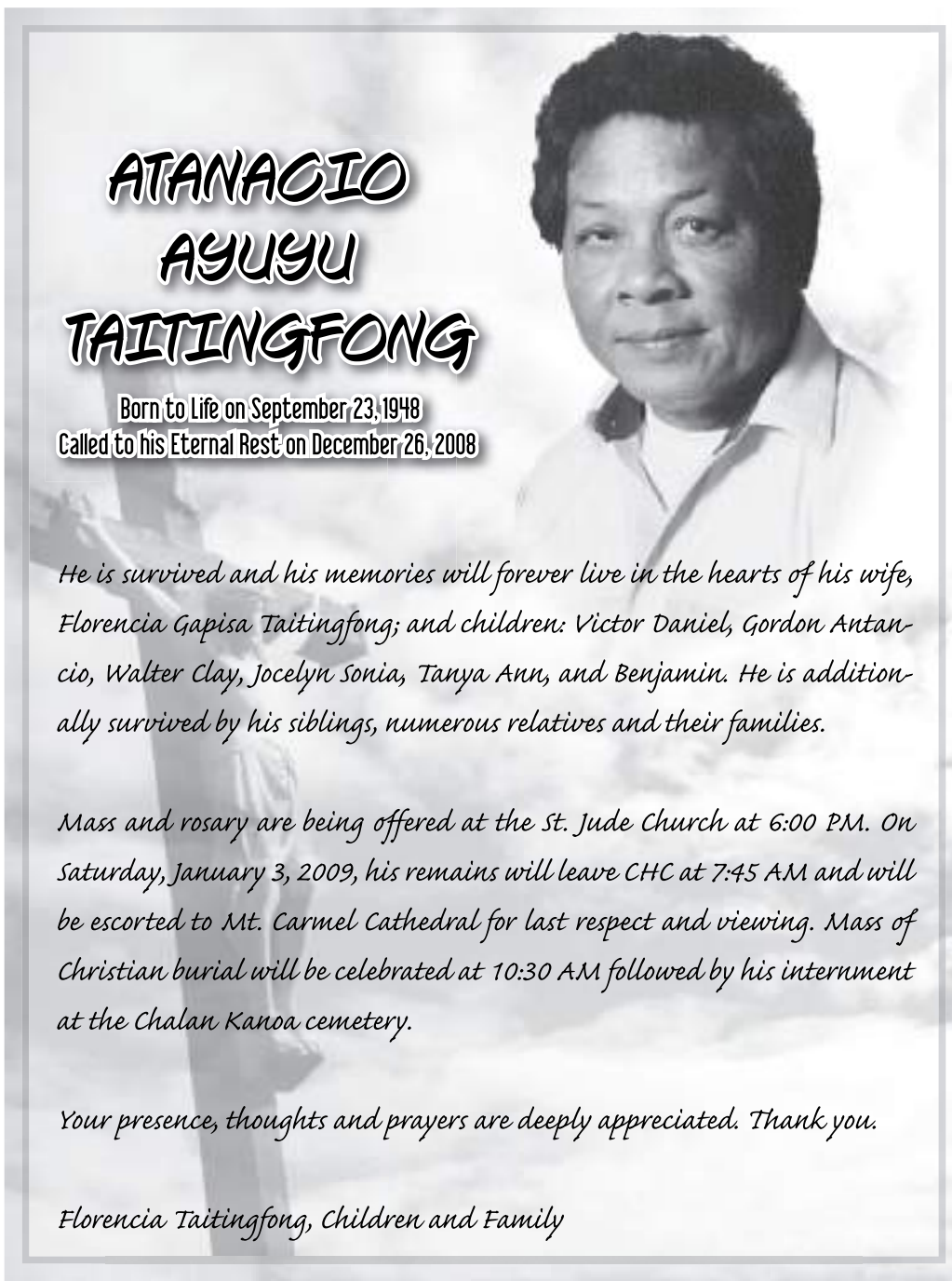
"There is simply a transformational challenge ... that needs new ideas and new solutions to unlock the potential of nature and reinforce the planetís natural carbon storage capacity," he said. "If you can have 7.8 billion people living comfortably with one-tenth, one-thousandth of the amount of energy, that opens up a new realm of possibility."

Some biomimicry products are still in the pipeline, but Steiner said many are in commercial use. "We're not talking about theory anymore," he said. "This is real stuff happening in the real world, in the real market."

Architecture has made the greatest use of biomimicry products. Benyus estimated that 300,000 buildings in Europe boast self-cleaning glass that copies the way water balls up on lotus leaves and simply rolls off.

Biomimicry is also gaining traction as researchers seek to cut the costs of solar cells and make them less rigid. Two companies—Konarka Technologies in Lowell, Mass., and Dyesol in New South Wales, Australia—have developed thin, dye-sensitized, solar cells that operate on the same principle that plants use to absorb the sun's rays and convert them to energy. These cells are not as efficient as their photovoltaic counterparts, but they are 60 percent cheaper and more flexible.

Including architectural projects, Pauli said, the 100 largest biomimicry products have generated more than $1.5 billion over the past four years. "The market potential is vast," he said.



He is survived and his memories will forever live in the hearts of his wife, Florencia Gapisa Taitingfong; and children: Victor Daniel, Gordon Antancio, Walter Clay, Jocelyn Sonia, Tanya Ann, and Benjamin. He is additionally survived by his siblings, numerous relatives and their families.

Mass and rosary are being offered at the St. Jude Church at 6:00 PM. On Saturday, January 3, 2009, his remains will leave CHC at 7:45 AM and will be escorted to Mt. Carmel Cathedral for last respect and viewing. Mass of Christian burial will be celebrated at 10:30 AM followed by his internment at the Chalan Kanoa cemetery.

Your presence, thoughts and prayers are deeply appreciated. Thank you.

Florencia Taitingfong, Children and Family

Memorias Guinaiya para I Ila Defunto:

Felix (Leling) Masga Mendiola

Julio Dia 17, 1950 - Decembre Dia 24, 2008

Lahen: †Felipe Camacho yan †Joaquina Masga Mendiola

Yetnun: †Zacharias Muna yan †Natividat Fejeran Tudela

Asaguan: Lourdes Fejeran Tudela Mendiola

Tatan: Alvin T. (Marleen S.) Mendiola, Janice M. (Joseph C.) Muna, Kahili SanNicolas, Jaclyn T. Mendiola, (John De Leon Guerrero), Adrian T. (Tanya P.) Mendiola, Janilyn T. Mendiola

Geulon: Matua, Louanne, Leisha, Kayline, Monique, Isabela, EJ, AJ, Zachery, Damien, Kaeddie

Che'lun: †Francisco M. Cabrera, Balbina M. (Ignacio) Perez, Fermina M. (Luis S.) Camacho, James M. Mendiola (Thomasa Palacios), Rosie M. (†Russell A.) Long, Florine M. (†John U.) Hofschneider, Martina M. (Thomas) Morgan, Rufino M. Mendiola (Bencilin John), Felipe M. (Kathy G.) Mendiola, Thomas M. (Marilyn L.) Mendiola,†David M. (†Victoria K.) Mendiola, Joseph M. (Carleen P.) Mendiola, Juanita M. Mendiola

Kiñadun: Santiago F. (Bertha C.) Tudela, Augustine F. (Connie) Tudela, Samuel F. (Annette S.) Tudela, Patricio F. (Carmen D.) Tudela, Dorothea T. (Benjamin) Seman, Joe F. (Frances C.) Tudela, Joaquin F. (Edith C.) Tudela, Rosalina T. (Joseph) Gabutin, Thomas F. (Nikonia DLG.) Tudela, Elaine F. Tudela (Paul Sasamoto).

Ha didingo lokkue' siha nos kuantos na man tihaña, man tihuña, subrinuña yan subrinañasiha

I lisayuña matututucha kada puengi gi alas 7:00, guatu gi gima' niha Dandan, Saipan. Para hu malaknos I tatataoña gi Inero Dia Dos, 2009 ya para hu ma koni' guatu gigima' yu'us San Vicente gi oran alas 8: 00 gi ega'an. Para hu tinatiyi nai I misaña gialas 11:00 gi ega'an dispues I interuña guatu gi seminteyon Chalan Kanoa.

Death & Funeral Announcement

Ricardo Edward Sablan Santos

"Rick Chungi"

Of Papago, Saipan passed away in the grace of our Lord on Thursday December 25, 2008 at the age of 55

Pre-deceased by his:

Father:	†Antonio Naputi Santos
Mother:	†Rosario Sablan Santos
Sister:	†Rosaline Santos Camacho
Paternal Grandparents:	†Jesus Ada & †Francisca Naputi Santos
Maternal Grandparents:	†Jose SN & †Rosa SN Sablan
Mother/Father In-Law:	†Jose Fausto & †Rosa Quidichai Arriola
Sister/Brother In-Law:	†Maria E. Omar, †Juan Quidachai, †Rita Terlaje

Survived by his:

Wife:	Dolores Arriola Santos
Children:	Richard Fejeran Santos (Cheryl Mo'Ika, Kiara Renee)
	Robert Fejeran Santos
	Ray Fejeran Santos
	Renee Sharlene Fejeran Santos
	Reynold Fejeran Santos
Reared Son:	Timmy Canaveral/Runet DLReyes (Lorna, Jonathan)

Brothers/Sisters & In-Laws:

Henry S/Soledad Santos	Julian Reyes/Ellen Avencena (†Rita Terlaje)
Francisca S/Lorenzo A Deleon Guerrero	†Maria E/Antonio Omar
Herman S/Belen Santos	†Juan/Jesusa Quidachai
Antonio S/Lydia S. Santos	Daniel/Monica Evangelista
David S/Virginia A. Santos	Adelina A/Michael Abanez
Lillian S/Wilfredo Villagracia	Virginia A/David S. Santos
Norman S. Santos/Rosa A Cabrera	Rosario Arriola/Jose Babauta
Albert S/Zerah DLC Santos	Jose Arriola/Beatrice Babauta
†Rosalina S/Francisco SN Camacho	Pedro/Janet Arriola
Marian S. Santos	Frances Arriola
Alicia S. Santos/Alfredo Manguba	

Reared Sister:	Claudia Santos/Melvin Tudela (Regino, Claude, Kaitani, Melvin John)
Reared Brother:	Jesus Malus
God Father:	Jose Borja Tudela

He is additionally survived by numerous, aunts, cousin, nephews, nieces.

On Friday , January 02, 2009, his remains will be escorted from Nuestra Senora Dela Paz Memorial Chapel at 7:00 a.m. to Mt. Carmel Cathedral. Responso service will be at 7:30 am followed by the Holy Rosary. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. Interment will follow at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Un Dangkulu Na si Yu'us Ma'ase

Ginen I Familia

2008: The year politics saturated our pop culture

NEW YORK (AP)—In any normal year, it would be impossible to discern a coherent theme from a year of American pop culture, try as we journalists might. This year was different.

The presidential campaign seeped into our culture everywhere it could: into our music, our television, our street art, our Internet habits. And it was a symbiotic relationship, for pop culture seeped back into our politics, too. Remember the bizarre moment Paris Hilton and Britney Spears became part of the campaign, courtesy of a John McCain ad likening Barack Obama to a vapid Hollywood celebrity?

Or try this: Tina Fey and Sarah Palin, walking by each other at a fake news conference on "Saturday Night Live," indistinguishable from each other in matching red blazers and Palin hairdos. Even Fey's toddler daughter had trouble telling them apart that night.

Now Palin's back in Alaska, Fey's back on "30 Rock" and, oh yes, Obama's on his way to the White House. But they weren't the only big names in the 2008 pop culture firmament. A chronological journey back:

JANUARY:

How can we begin without BRITNEY SPEARS—still, amazingly, the most-searched term on Yahoo. A few days into 2008, she melts down spectacularly, ending up in a hospital after locking herself in a room with her young son. We don't need Dr. Phil to tell us this girl needs help, though he does. Celeb magazines freely diagnose her as bipolar. (But more on Britney later.)

In politics, HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON has her first real pop-culture moment of the year when she chokes up talking to voters in a New Hampshire diner, a scene to be replayed endlessly on YouTube.

And true tragedy strikes when actor HEATH LEDGER dies of an accidental prescription drug overdose in a New York apartment, cutting short a brilliant career.

FEBRUARY:

The Obama slogan "Yes We Can" ricochets across the Web in rapper and songwriter WILL.I.AM's viral video hit, starring a host of celebrities. It's not the only good news for Obama: His campaign raises a staggering $55 million this month, a success attributed to small donations gathered on the Internet.

And "SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE" spoofs the media's fondness for Obama—later, Clinton will refer to the skit in a real debate.

HOLLYWOOD WRITERS, meanwhile, end their 100-day strike. Days later, the OSCARS air to dismal ratings.

MARCH:

Politics continues to enthrall, and this time it's New York Gov. ELIOT SPITZER who's on everyone's mind. The most striking visual: the ashen-faced misery of his wife, Silda, standing next to him at the podium as he resigns over a prostitution scandal. The blogosphere and the airwaves buzz with the question: Why did she stand by him? Would you?

Obama may be the Internet candidate, but here's an Internet sensation he'd prefer disappear: video of his former pastor JEREMIAH WRIGHT, making incendiary comments that will give Obama a major political headache.

APRIL:

MILEY CYRUS is a genuine superstar at age 15, a role model to countless girls. So what's the problem? A few pesky photos shot by Annie Leibovitz for Vanity Fair. They show the Disney princess, aka Hannah Montana of course, in a come-hither pose, with a bare back and shoulders. A rare bump in the road for this teen phenom.

In one of his many pop-culture moments, OBAMA displays true hip-hop cred, channeling Jay-Z with a "Dirt Off Your Shoulders" reference at a North Carolina rally. Mashups spread across the Web.

MAY:

After four years and endless buildup, the "SEX AND THE CITY" gals return in a feature-length film. Will Carrie find happiness with Mr. Big? Yes, but even happier are the producers, after a $55.7 million opening weekend—unprecedented for a chick flick. And this IS a chick flick. Men flock to root canal appointments.

HARRISON FORD returns as Indiana Jones—at age 65! We doubt Hollywood would be so kind to a 65-year-old actress. And speaking of older women, they're said to be behind the "American Idol" victory of 25-year-old DAVID COOK, who beats the baby-faced 17-year-old, DAVID ARCHULETA, breaking the hearts of countless tween girls.

Los Angeles street artist SHEPARD FAIREY creates his wildly popular poster of Obama, a red-white-and-blue hued image of the candidate gazing ahead, underlined by the word "HOPE."

JUNE:

TIM RUSSERT dies at 58 of a sudden heart attack, after more than 16 years in one of the most influential jobs in TV news—moderator of NBC's "Meet The Press." The death causes some baby boomers to start to wonder about their own health.

A computer-animated science fiction romance? Leave it to Pixar. After "The Incredibles," "Ratatouille" and "Cars," another triumph for the studio comes in the form of "WALL-E," a futuristic film about love between two robots.

AP

In this Sept. 7, 2008 file photo, Britney Spears is seen at the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards held at the Paramount Pictures Studio Lot in Los Angeles.

JULY:

Bonjour to the new JOLIE-PITT twins, who emerge in France, where parents ANGELINA JOLIE and BRAD PITT are hunkered down on their enormous estate. And BATMANIA reigns, thanks to LEDGER'S stunning (and posthumous) portrayal of the Joker in "The Dark Knight."

BRITNEY and PARIS make their unwitting entrance into the campaign, fodder for McCain's commercial mocking Obama as "the biggest celebrity in the world." Hilton, though, gets the last laugh: The doe-eyed hotel heiress, lounging in a leopard-print swimsuit, offers up a much cleverer video riposte.

AUGUST:

Call this the anti-celebrity month: Wary after that Britney-Paris spot, the DEMOCRATIC PARTY does its very best to de-emphasize the celeb factor at its convention in Denver. Meanwhile, McCain's anti-celebrity campaign unveils its own, well, celebrity: the telegenic PALIN, who bursts onto the scene with a speech that galvanizes the GOP convention.

MADONNA turns 50! And the chiseled superstar is hardly alone. Also hitting the half-century mark this year: MICHAEL JACKSON, PRINCE, ELLEN DEGENERES, MICHELLE PFEIFFER, VIGGO MORTENSEN. Let's imagine an amazing party at the royal palace in Monaco, where PRINCE ALBERT also hits the big 5-0, perhaps covered for CNN by CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR (yup, 50 too.)

SEPTEMBER:

"I can see Russia from my house!" FEY debuts her impersonation of PALIN on "Saturday Night Live." Kudos to the "SNL" writers, but you can't say Palin doesn't give them plenty of material—including verbatim chunks of her rambling exchanges with KATIE COURIC. The CBS anchor, long plagued by low ratings and high expectations, makes a welcome comeback.

Also making a comeback: the '60s, with all that guilt-free smoking, thanks to "MAD MEN," the evocative drama on cable's AMC. "Mad Men" wins an Emmy this month, thrilling its small but hugely loyal audience.

OCTOBER:

Shall we just call it "HSM3"? And if you don't know what that means, you probably won't be seeing the movie. "High School Musical 3: Senior Year," the big-screen sequel to the two Disney TV movies, sings and dances its fresh-faced way to the top of the box office, thanks to the durable appeal of Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens, Ashley Tisdale and the other "HSM" alums.

"SNL" scores its highest ratings in 14 years when it snags the ultimate prize: Palin herself. The VP candidate proves a game cast member, obliging happily when Amy Poehler shouts out: "All the mavericks in the house, put your hands up!" "

And JOE THE PLUMBER makes his debut, as a constant reference in the third presidential debate. Later, Joe, aka Samuel Joseph Wurzelbacher, 34, campaigns for McCain and Palin.

NOVEMBER:

Yeah yeah, Obama is elected, but we'll reserve the pop culture prize this month for OPRAH WINFREY. Weeping on the shoulder of a stranger at Obama's victory rally, and gushing uncontrollably on her postelection show, the talk-show queen can surely claim a little credit for the triumph of her "favorite guy." Maybe MOST celebrity endorsements don't mean much, but this is Oprah. Two economists even claim she brought Obama a million votes in the primaries.

DECEMBER:

Any true pop culture story must end as we started: with BRITNEY—for, after a year in which she seemed to reach the depths, this famously durable young woman is in the midst of an astonishing comeback, with "Circus," her latest CD, reaching No.1 on the album charts, according to her label, Jive. At 27, she seems to be not only "the world's pop princess," as her manager says. She's the world's pop culture princess, too.

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Bedtime Stories
Thurs thru Sat 1:20 4:05 7:25 9:45
Sunday 1:20 4:05 7:25
Mon thru Wed 4:05 7:25
Adam Sandler, Keri Russell
Comedy, Adventure • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
Hotel handyman Skeeter Bronson's life is changed forever when the bedtime stories he tells his niece and nephew start to mysteriously come true. When he tries to help his family by telling one outlandish tale after another, it's the kids' unexpected contributions that turn all of their lives upside down.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
Thurs thru Sat 1:00 4:00 7:00 10:00
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon thru Wed 4:00 7:00
Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett
Drama, Romance • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
Benjamin Button is a man who is born in his eighties and ages backwards: a man, like any of us, who is unable to stop time. From New Orleans at the end of World War I in 1918, into the 21st century, on a journey as unusual as any man's life can be, this is the grand tale of a not so ordinary man and the people and places he discovers along the way, the loves he finds and loses, the joys of life and the sadness of death, and what lasts beyond time.

Marley and Me
Thurs thru Sat 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55
Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:15
Mon thru Wed 4:30 7:15
Owen Wilson, Jennifer Aniston
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG 13

Valkyrie
Thurs thru Sat 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:50
Sunday 1:30 4:25 7:20
Mon thru Wed 4:25 7:20
Tom Cruise, Bill Nighy
Thriller, War, Historical • Rated PG 13

★ ★ ★

Yes Man
Thurs thru Sat 1:05 4:20 7:05 9:35
Sunday 1:05 4:20 7:05
Mon thru Wed 4:20 7:05
Jim Carrey, Bradley Cooper
Comedy • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
Carl Allen's life is going nowhere—the operative word being "no"—until he signs up for a self-help program based on one simple covenant: say yes to everything—and anything. Unleashing the power of "YES" begins to transform Carl's life in amazing an unexpected ways, getting him promoted at work and opening the door to a new romance.

The Tale of Despereaux
Thurs thru Sat 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:30
Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:30
Mon thru Wed 4:15 7:30
Sigourney Weaver, Dustin Hoffman
Animated, Chicldren • Rated G

Seven Pounds
Thurs thru Sat 1:15 4:10 7:10 9:40
Sunday 1:15 4:10 7:10
Mon thru Wed 4:10 7:10
Will Smith, Rosario Dawson
Drama, Romance • Rated PG 13

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NYE means partying at home for many

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP)—On recent New Year's Eves in South Beach, booking Lindsay Lohan and R&B singer John Legend as the entertainment would have caused a ticket stampede almost regardless the cost.

But with the economy in recession, that's not the case this year: the $200 individual tickets and $1,500 VIP tables are moving slower than expected.

"I know times are tough right now and everything is affected," said Vanessa Menkes, spokeswoman for the Opium Group, which runs several Miami Beach clubs. "But I also know that people want to celebrate the new year on a festive foot."

Clubs and party promoters around the country say revelers are doing more bargain hunting than in the past and are sticking to set budgets for their night out, while other partygoers are opting to ring in the new year by throwing their own exclusive parties at home.

Paige Newman, an editor at Zandl Group, a New York-based consumer trend research company, said many young adults are staying home to entertain with dinner parties, board and video games, barbecues and movie screenings.

"Because of the weakness in the economy and the rising unemployment rates, we've noticed a backlash against flaunting money and excessive spending among young adults," Newman said. "Even people who are not concerned about their finances are deciding to cut back and paying extra for a party hosted by a celebrity is off-trend now."

AP

In this Nov. 22, 2008 file photo, singer John Legend arrives at the CNN Heroes: An All Star Tribute awards show in the Hollywood area of Los Angeles.

Jessica Cabrera and a small group of her friends never think twice before paying the $150 to $200 cover charge to see an A-list celebrity host a New Year's Eve event on South Beach.

But this year, Cabrera has decided to celebrate at home. The 24-year-old legal assistant, who recently moved into her own one-bedroom apartment in downtown Miami, said juggling rent, food and a car payment has definitely cramped her social life.

"The money I would be spending on to go to these parties could go toward paying off some of my bills," Cabrera said.

Tickets to see Legend perform at Prive in Miami Beach have not all been sold, and down the street at Mansion, where Lohan and gal pal Samantha Ronson will be hosting an event, organizers are still hustling to sell VIP tables, ranging from $1,500 to $5,000.

People are negotiating more over what they are willing to pay for these gala events, and are more interested in affordable parties, said Michael Galluppo, general manager at Newyears.com, a national Web site started in 1998 that gives party information and sell event tickets in major cities.

"With all that's going on, I think people are being smarter about what they want to do and have planned for New Year's a lot earlier this year," Galluppo said. "Since November, we've noticed a lot more visitors to our site, which is a good indicator that people are seeing what's out there this year before making a final decision."

Hundreds of the events listed on the site are still available. One event in New York City and in San Francisco each are marked as sold out, and two events are sold out in Chicago and in Miami. But in Las Vegas, headliners like Kid Rock, the Kardashian sisters, and singer Ashlee Simpson and her husband Pete Wentz can't seem to draw in sold-out crowds to their own events.

Rapper DMX pleads guilty to drug, theft charges

PHOENIX (AP)—DMX has reached a plea deal on multiple drug possession, theft and animal cruelty charges.

The rapper (real name: Earl Simmons) pleaded guilty on Tuesday to one misdemeanor count of animal cruelty, one felony count of theft, and one count each of felony possession of marijuana and a narcotic drug.

DMX, who appeared in handcuffs and wearing a black-and-white striped prison uniform, is expected to receive a minimum 90-day jail sentence as well as probation under terms of a plea agreement, according to the Maricopa County attorney's office. He will remain in the county jail until his sentencing and won't be given credit for time served.

A Maricopa County Superior Court commissioner has set a sentencing hearing for Jan. 30.

Additional charges will be dismissed then.

As part of the plea agreement, DMX cannot own any animals, possess firearms and must attend an animal offender treatment program. If he violates probation, he could be sentenced to more than 10 years in prison.

A call to his public defender was not returned.

The 38-year-old rapper—whose albums include "It's Dark and Hell Is Hot" and "Flesh of My Flesh, Blood of My Blood" and "Year of the Dog ... Again"- has been arrested several times in Arizona in the past year and missed several court dates.

DMX

The animal cruelty and dangerous drugs charges stem from an August 2007 raid Maricopa County sheriff's deputies conducted at DMX's home in the Phoenix suburb of Cave Creek. Investigating a report of animal abuse, authorities found three dead dogs, guns, ammunition and drug paraphernalia.

Authorities alleged that DMX gave a false name and Social Security number when being treated at a Scottsdale hospital in April. He was indicted on felony charges of theft and taking someone's identity.

In May, sheriff's deputies and a SWAT team went to his home again to serve arrest and search warrants on the earlier drug and animal cruelty charges. DMX briefly barricaded himself in his bedroom before surrendering. Deputies said they found marijuana in his house.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Actors Bacon, Sedgwick among Madoff victims

NEW YORK (AP)—Call it six degrees of Bernard Madoff. Kevin Bacon and wife Kyra Sedgwick are among the many victims of the massive Ponzi scheme run by the disgraced New York money manager. Bacon's publicist, Allen Eichhorn, confirmed Tuesday that the couple had investments with Madoff. He wouldn't say how much money Bacon, whose most recent film is "Frost/Nixon," and "The Closer" star Sedgwick might have lost. Madoff told federal investigators that his investment business was "a lie" that lost as much as $50 billion. Other Hollywood victims have included a charity linked to director Steven Spielberg and his DreamWorks partner Jeffrey Katzenberg, and screenwriter Eric Roth, whose credits include "Forrest Gump" and "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."

Woody Harrelson weds longtime love in Maui

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Woody Harrelson and his longtime love have officially wed. A spokeswoman for Harrelson said the 47-year-old actor married his girlfriend of 20 years, Laura Louie, in Maui on Sunday. The spokeswoman, Ina Treciokas, added that the ceremony was attended by family and friends. Harrelson and Louie have three daughters. Harrelson's recent screen credits include "No Country for Old Men," "Semi-Pro" and "Seven Pounds."

Children's book based on Holocaust story is pulled

NEW YORK (AP)—The fallout continues from Herman Rosenblat's discredited Holocaust story. Laurie Friedman's "Angel Girl," a children's book inspired by Rosenblat, was pulled Tuesday by the Lerner Publishing Group. President and publisher Adam Lerner said in a statement that the Minneapolis-based company had been misled by Rosenblat and his wife, Roma. "We are dismayed to learn about Herman and Roma Rosenblat's recantation of part of their Holocaust survival story," Lerner said. "While this tragic event in world history needs to be taught to children, it is imperative that it is done so in a factual way that doesn't sacrifice veracity for emotional impact." Friedman, whose other books include the popular "Mallory" series, said in a statement issued through Lerner that the Rosenblats had reviewed her manuscript and assured her of its accuracy.

Resolutions made for one day set examples all year long

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR READERS: Rise and shine, everyone! Welcome to a brand-new year. Today is our chance for a new beginning, the day we discard destructive habits for healthy new ones. With that in mind, I'm printing Dear Abby's oft-requested list of New Year's resolutions—adapted by my mother from the original credo of Al-Anon.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will live through this day only. I will not brood about yesterday or obsess about tomorrow. I will not set far-reaching goals or try to overcome all of my problems at once. I know that I can do something for 24 hours that would overwhelm me if I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will be happy. I will not dwell on thoughts that depress me. If my mind fills with clouds, I will chase them away and fill it with sunshine.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will accept what is. I will face reality. I will correct those things that I can correct and accept those I cannot.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will improve my mind. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration. I will not be a mental loafer.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will make a conscious effort to be agreeable. I will be kind and courteous to those who cross my path, and I'll not speak ill of others. I'll improve my appearance, speak softly, and not interrupt when someone else is talking. Just for today, I'll refrain from improving anybody but myself.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will do something positive to improve my health. If I'm a smoker, I'll quit. If I'm overweight, I'll eat healthily—if only just for today. And not only that, I'll get off the couch and take a brisk walk, even if it's only around the block.

JUST FOR TODAY, I will gather the courage to do what is right and take responsibility for my own actions.

And now, Dear Readers, I would like to share an item that was sent in by I.J. Bhatia, who lives in New Delhi, India:

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: This year, no resolutions, only some guidelines. The Holy Vedas say, "Man has subjected himself to thousands of self-inflicted bondages. Wisdom comes to a man who lives according to the true eternal laws of nature." The following prayer of St. Francis contains a powerful message:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

"Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

"Where there is injury, pardon;

"Where there is doubt, faith;

"Where there is despair, hope;

"Where there is darkness, light;

"Where there is sadness, joy.

"O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

"To be understood as to understand;

"To be loved as to love.

"For it is in giving that we receive;

"It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

"It is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

May this New Year bring with it peace and joy. And to one and all—a happy, healthy 2009.

With love, ABBY

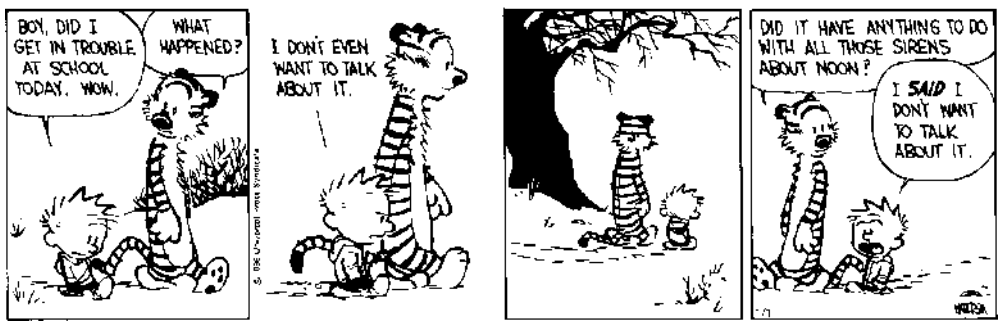
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

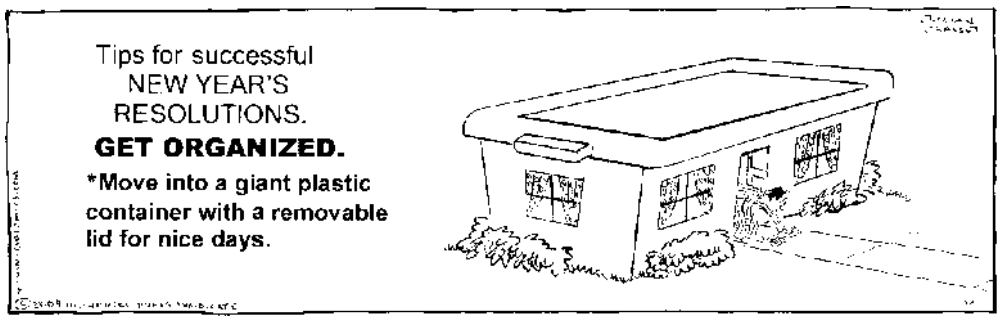

BOY, DID I GET IN TROUBLE AT SCHOOL TODAY. WOW.
WHAT HAPPENED?
I DON'T EVEN WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
DID IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH ALL THOSE SIRENS ABOUT NOON?
I SAID I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


Tips for successful NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS.
GET ORGANIZED.
*Move into a giant plastic container with a removable lid for nice days.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

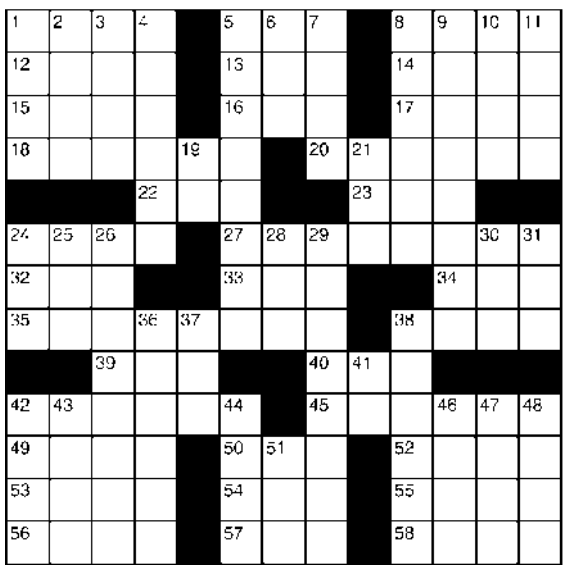
ACROSS
1 Equitable
5 Picks out of 42-Across
8 Music lover's setup
12 Bc
13 Cattle call
14 Muscat's sultanate
15 Rib relinquisher
16 Spacecraft compartment
17 Makes up one's mind
18 Coleridge's "pleasure dome"
20 Quick PC program
22 Kvetch
23 Carte lead-in
24 Eager, plus
27 Pest
32 Poorly lit
33 Shade provider
34 Paving material
35 Fastened a fly
38 Meat-grading org.
39 Einstein's birthplace
40 Possess
42 Cop-show scene, often
45 Lead astray
49 Others (Lat.)
50 Likely
52 Press
53 Catcher's aid
54 Writer Buscaglia
55 "Zounds!"
56 Biscay and Biscayne
57 Scratch the surface
58 Collections

DOWN
1 Linen source
2 Verdi opera
3 Terrible guy?
4 Send back into custody
5 Assaulted verbally
6 Scooby-—
7 Pop
8 To-do
9 Surgical grafts
10 Kismet
11 "Meet Me — Louis"
19 Opposite of nyet
21 — de deux
24 Wood-shaping tool
25 Square root of XLIX
26 Freedom from harm
28 Director Grosbard
29 Charatan
30 Scoundrel
31 Historic time
36 Accordion features
37 Ostrich's cousin
38 "Unmentionables"
41 Lindbergh book
42 Easter entree
43 Hipbones
44 Tropical tree
46 Incite
47 Winter garment
48 Tackles' teammates
51 Shell-game need

Solution time: 25 mins.

O	V	U	M	■	B	A	C	■	T	E	S	T
M	■	N	E	■	E	V	A	■	I	N	C	A
E	N	D	A	N	G	E	R	■	A	D	A	M
N	O	O	S	F	■	■	R	A	R	O	N	S
■	■	■	C	O	D	E	■	G	A	R	■	■
O	R	F	Y	■	I	N	C	F	■	S	F	W
W	O	N	■	E	N	D	E	D	■	E	G	O
■	A	D	■	C	O	O	R	■	E	D	C	E
■	■	E	O	N	■	W	E	A	R	■	■	■
C	R	A	H	A	M	■	■	C	R	A	F	T
■	■	R	A	■	E	N	C	E	A	V	O	R
I	C	E	R	■	L	A	Y	■	N	E	R	O
D	O	D	E	■	T	E	E	■	T	R	E	Y

Yesterday's answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute. touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Verne Troyer, 40; Dedee Pfeiffer, 45; Grandmaster Flash, 51; Country Joe McDonald, 67

Happy Birthday: This will be an emotional year. Overreacting or taking on too much in the early stages of whatever you plan to do will saddle you for the entire year. Keep your plans within budget. Leave nothing to chance and don't fear change or failure. Your numbers are 6, 8, 19, 21, 27, 39, 46

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Compromise and get along if you want to gain ground, make friends or obtain allies. Arguments will get blown out of proportion and could end up causing a family feud. Take a back seat today and avoid opposition. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Visit friends or relatives and catch up on the past and discuss the future. Today is about reviewing and renewing, getting your priorities straight and realizing who has got your back. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Consider your dreams, hopes and wishes and set your goals for the year ahead. You have all sorts of opportunities heading your way. Love looks promising and a creative change to your status is in the works. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): If you didn't manage to deal with the changes that befuddled you last year, do so now. You have another chance to rectify things. Don't let anger and ego stop you from enjoying someone you miss but are upset with. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Spend time discussing your future plans with the person most likely to be by your side. A lot can be accomplished to ensure you get what you want when the time comes. Preparation will be the key to your success. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Bring the old and the young together for a mix of people who can offer you good conversation and lots of interesting ideas. Open your doors to friends, neighbors and relatives, starting the year off on the right foot with the support you need. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't count on getting the help you need from the people closest to you. Personal problems are likely to mount at home if you allow overindulgence mentally, physically or emotionally. Do not get in over your head. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Problems with your lover or best friend will leave you feeling emotional. Visit someone who can help. Straight talk may not bring you the results you want but it will put an end to the ongoing troubles you have been facing within a relationship. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll be oblivious to the troubled waters surrounding you. You can only hide from emotional turmoil for so long before you are forced to deal with matters head on. Start the year off on the right foot by clearing your emotional debts. ✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You may want to lay down the ground rules this year to maintain and gain ground financially, personally and professionally. Change is upon you and to recognize it before it broadsides you will be half the battle. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't allow anyone to make you angry or put words in your mouth. Your actions will count, so be careful how you treat the people you want in your life. Be honest about your motives. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You'll be emotional, sensitive and passionate about what you want to accomplish in the future. Sharing your thoughts may not be in your best interest. Secrets will not be kept and unusual circumstances will lead you down the wrong path. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are innovative, inventive and creative. You give back generously to those who help you. You are a dreamer with the drive and courage to overcome any obstacles.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		1			8			
			6		1			
3		9			6			1
	7			1			5	
			2	4	5			
	2			6			4	
7		3			1			4
			9		2			
		2			7			

Difficulty Level ★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	5	7	4	1	3	8	6	9
4	9	8	7	6	2	5	1	3
3	6	1	9	5	8	2	4	7
1	3	5	6	2	9	7	8	4
6	7	9	5	8	4	3	2	1
8	4	2	3	7	1	6	9	5
7	8	6	1	9	5	4	3	2
9	2	4	8	3	7	1	5	6
5	1	3	2	4	6	9	7	8

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

REPLACEMENT PARTS Solution: 8 letters

E	L	L	A	(U)	N	A	M	A	N	R	E	D	R	O
R	I	A	(N)	D	W	A	T	F	F	R	O	F	C	R
U	A	(I)	I	R	N	O	K	T	R	D	S	R	H	I
T	(T)	R	B	C	Y	O	U	E	G	A	U	O	E	G
C	S	T	S	O	R	P	H	E	N	P	P	T	V	I
A	N	S	T	B	M	E	O	A	E	M	P	S	R	N
F	I	U	O	O	A	O	M	N	W	U	O	E	O	A
U	R	D	C	R	R	A	T	M	T	P	R	R	L	L
N	O	N	K	E	Y	R	A	U	O	I	T	V	E	D
A	D	I	L	T	I	C	S	E	A	C	A	I	T	A
M	N	A	A	A	H	E	N	T	C	P	Y	C	S	M
O	E	G	P	I	L	U	S	E	D	I	I	E	O	A
D	V	E	N	L	T	S	E	U	Q	E	R	E	L	G
E	R	E	C	N	A	M	R	O	F	R	E	P	C	E
L	A	C	I	R	T	C	E	L	E	N	G	I	N	E

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Yesterday's Answer: Gueliz

CLASSIFIED ADS

WHATZIT Solution:
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For Sale
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WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

STRAWBERRY CAKE

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Saipan Tribune

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• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

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ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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40%OFF FOR OVERSIZED AND DAMAGED MAHOGANY LUMBER
U.S. LUMBER REGULAR 2X4X20 - $6.95

UTILITY LUMBER REGULAR	UTILITY LUMBER TREATED
2X4X12 - $3.93	2X4X12 - $6.70
2X4X14 - $5.00	2X4X14 - $7.70
2X4X16 - $5.58	2X4X16 - $8.70
2X4X18 - $6.30	2X4X18 - $9.70
2X4X20 - $6.85	2X4X20 - $10.70
2X6X12 - $6.90	2X6X12 - $10.20
2X6X14 - $7.90	2X6X14 - $12.20
2X6X16 - $8.90	2X6X16 - $14.20
2X6X18 - $9.90	2X6X18 - $15.20
2X6X20 - $10.90	2X6X20 - $17.20

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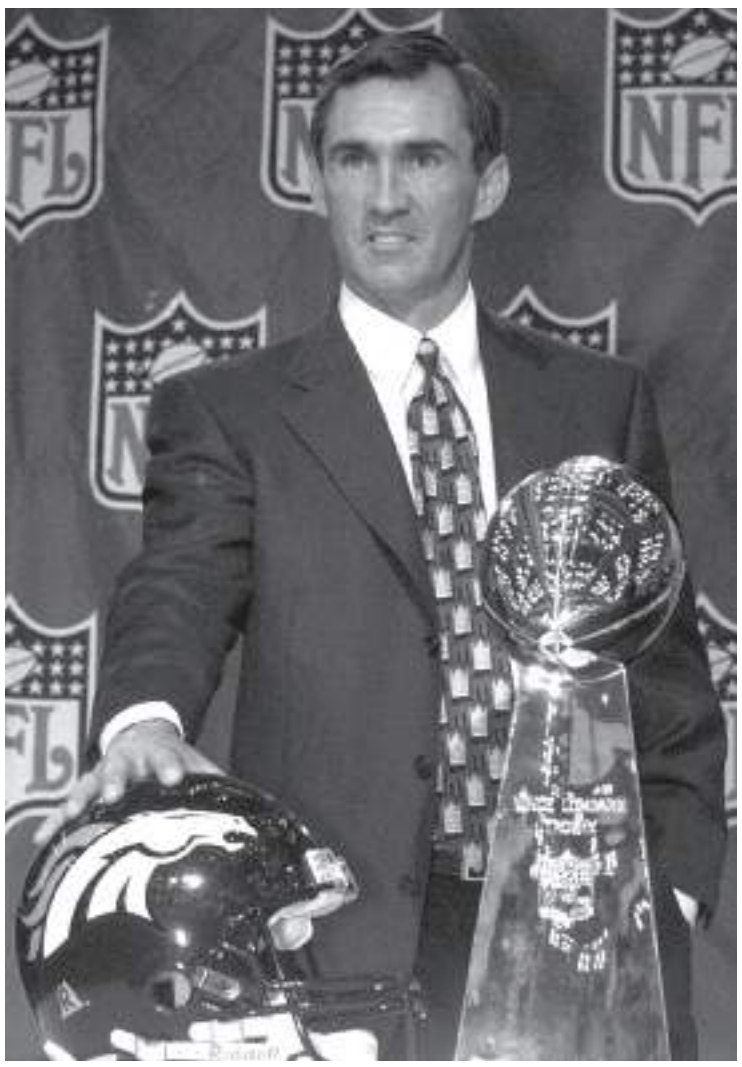
Broncos fire coach Shanahan



AP
In this Jan. 29, 1999 file photo, Denver Broncos coach Mike Shanahan poses with the Vince Lombardi trophy and a Broncos helmet at a Super Bowl news conference in Miami.

DENVER (AP)—He was known as a genius, a mastermind and, yes, a Super Bowl champion. Shockingly, though, Mike Shanahan has a new title: Unemployed coach.

Shanahan became the latest and most stunning victim of the NFL coaching purge, fired Tuesday by the Denver Broncos after a late-season collapse knocked the team out of the playoffs for the third straight year.

Shanahan became the fourth coach to be fired this week, joining Eric Mangini, Rod Marinelli and Romeo Crennel, after going 24-24 over the last three seasons. That included three straight losses this year that turned a three-game division lead to an 8-8 record.

"After giving this careful consideration, I have concluded that a change in our football operations is in the best interests of the Denver Broncos," owner Pat Bowlen said.

Bowlen had been steadfastly loyal to Shanahan, rewarding the coach who brought the long-awaited Super Bowl title to Denver with what seemed like carte blanche for life.

But Denver remained stuck on only one postseason victory since John Elway retired in 1999 following back-to-back championships. Shanahan finishes at 146-91 over 14 seasons in Denver, including playoffs; his final game was an unseemly 52-21 loss to San Diego with the division title on the line.

"I'm very shocked, extremely shocked," said rookie Spencer Larsen, who played fullback and linebacker this year. "I don't think any of us saw this coming."

Quarterback Jay Cutler certainly didn't.

"I was talking to Mike yesterday about personnel moves," he said in an interview on KCNC-TV in Denver. "I'm as shocked as anybody else. I think it's the wrong move."

For any other coach, on any other team, this kind of thing wouldn't have come as such a surprise, considering the season that just ended.

It included a historic collapse with Denver becoming the first team since divisional play started in 1967 to blow a three-game lead with three games left.

The Broncos' defense gave up 448 points, third worst in the NFL, including 112 during the three-game collapse at the end. It was ranked 29th in yards allowed and tied for last in the NFL with a minus-17 turnover margin.

Who might be able to turn it around?

Because Shanahan's job had seemed so secure, there hasn't been much speculation. Now, all the usual suspects will surely surface, both on the coaching and personnel sides: Bill Cowher, Scott Pioli, Jim Fassel. Shanahan's best assistant over the years, Gary Kubiak, is under contract with the Texans.

"I don't know if necessarily they'll find a better football coach," said linebacker Bill Romanowski, a key player on the Super Bowl teams. "Mike is an outstanding football coach, one of the better coaches I had, if not the best. But players start to get tired of the same routines, the same kind of play calling. A new fresh coat of paint sometimes does a whole lot of good."

Messages left on Elway's cell phone by The Associated Press were not immediately returned.

Bowlen and Shanahan were scheduled to hold news conferences Wednesday. Shanahan had three years left on his contract, worth about $20 million.

It will be interesting to see if Bowlen wants a change in the way the organization is run. Over the past several years, the most successful teams have moved away from the once-popular structure of having a coach-slash-GM in charge of everything.

In Denver, Shanahan ran everything and as things went downhill, he relieved defensive coordinators—Greg Robinson, Ray Rhodes, Larry Coyer and Jim Bates—in almost revolving-door fashion.

This year, as the defense floundered, it became obvious it wasn't just a coaching problem. It was an issue of talent on the field, and in Denver, the buck stopped with Shanahan.

He focused on defense in 2007, using two of his four picks for defensive linemen Jarvis Moss and Tim Crowder, neither of whom have been much of a factor. Also of late, he wasted a third-round pick on Maurice Clarett (2005), spent millions on running back bust Travis Henry (2007), hardly got anything from Boss Bailey, Niko Koutouvides and Dewayne Robertson (2008).

Yet even when the talent wasn't there, he usually fielded a competitive team. Decades of solid sellouts and the full confidence of his owner made him almost impervious to criticism. Even after blowout losses, he was wont to acknowledge, at least publicly, deficiencies in his coaching or management style.

He was known—first affectionately, then more derisively—as "The Mastermind" during his tenure with the Broncos. And despite his poor finish in Denver, Shanahan shouldn't have much trouble getting another job if he's interested—and willing to part with the 35,000-square-foot house he's building in a fancy part of Denver.

He earned the reputation honestly, returning to lead the Broncos a few years after a short, unsuccessful stint with the Oakland Raiders, where he was fired by Al Davis in a contentious parting that still isn't fully resolved. (Shanahan claims he's owed $250,000).

Shanahan became a coaching star as a coordinator and confidant of Elway's while the Broncos were being coached by Dan Reeves. But Reeves ended up firing Shanahan, accusing him of insubordination for supposedly conspiring with Elway to hatch game plans behind the head coach's back.

That made for a great subplot for the Super Bowl 10 years ago, when Denver met Reeves and the Falcons, for what turned out to be the last great moment for a franchise that Shanahan took to the top.

Denver's two Super Bowl victories came behind the running of Terrell Davis and the brilliance of Elway, but Shanahan pulled the strings and finally helped deliver the title to a city that had been through four painful Super Bowl losses, three with Elway at the helm.

NFL BRIEFS

Jets plan to speak with Cowher about coaching job

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Jets will talk to Bill Cowher about their vacant coaching job, a person familiar with the search told The Associated Press on Tuesday. While no formal discussions have been scheduled yet, the team plans to speak soon with the former Super Bowl-winning coach, according to the person who requested anonymity because the individual was not authorized to discuss the search. Cowher has also expressed interest in the job that opened Monday, the person said, when the Jets fired Eric Mangini after three seasons. The Jets also will meet with New York Giants defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo on Saturday, according to another person familiar with the coaching search. New York is also expected to interview a pair of in-house candidates: offensive coordinator Brian Schottenheimer and offensive line coach Bill Callahan, who also served as assistant head coach under Mangini. Marty Schottenheimer, Mike Holmgren and Jim Fassel, names mentioned in various reports, aren't believed to be on the Jets' immediate radar.

Source: Browns to interview ex-Jets coach Mangini

CLEVELAND (AP)—The Cleveland Browns have scheduled an interview Tuesday with fired New York Jets coach Eric Mangini, a person with knowledge of the meeting told The Associated Press. Mangini, dismissed Monday by the Jets after they collapsed down the stretch and missed the playoffs, will meet with Browns owner Randy Lerner in the New York area, said the person who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the interview. Lerner has set up an interview for Wednesday with Scott Pioli, New England's vice president of player personnel, the person said. Lerner also received permission to interview Atlanta president Rich McKay. Falcons owner Arthur Blank granted the request as his team prepares for a wild-card game on Saturday. "Rich has had some casual conversations—I don't think with Randy, but with someone else in their organization—but there have been no discussions on a face-to-face basis," Blank told the AP. "We think Rich is an important part of the success of the franchise. He's responsible for all the business side of our operations, helps (GM) Thomas (Dimitroff) tremendously with the salary cap and all of the (contract) negotiations, and he's responsible for helping us as we go on a journey for a new stadium and a whole variety of other things. "We're hopeful Rich will stay in Atlanta and we certainly believe that, but on the other hand, we have to let the process take its course."

Report: Jets' Favre has torn biceps tendon

NEW YORK (AP)—Jets quarterback Brett Favre reportedly has a torn biceps tendon in his right arm that will not need major surgery to repair, ESPN said Tuesday. The 39-year-old Favre routinely underthrew receivers and appeared to lose some velocity on his throws late in the season as the Jets went 1-4 down the stretch and failed to make the playoffs. ESPN, citing unnamed sources, reported that Favre would need arthroscopic surgery to repair the injury, but could also play without having an operation. Favre's agent, James "Bus" Cook, did not immediately respond to e-mail and phone messages left by The Associated Press seeking comment. After the Jets' season-ending 24-17 loss to Miami on Sunday, Favre said he's been feeling discomfort in his strong right arm "for quite a while." He also complained of pain in the back of the shoulder, the biceps and sometimes in his neck. Favre, who also reportedly has some calcification in the area of the injury, is expected to take several weeks to decide whether he will return to the Jets, ESPN reported.

Buffalo Bills retain coach Jauron

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)—Bills coach Dick Jauron will return next season, team owner Ralph Wilson announced Tuesday. Though citing the dissatisfaction of the team's fans over a third consecutive 7-9 season, Wilson elected to retain Jauron and the entire coaching staff, believing the team is "better served by continuity in the coaching staff rather than a disruptive overhaul." The decision was released in a three-paragraph statement issued by the Bills, and came shortly after Jauron met with Wilson at the owner's home in suburban Detroit. Wilson did not say whether Jauron received a contract extension beyond next season. Jauron had completed his initial three-year contract after this season, and kept his job despite the team losing eight of its final 10 games after a 5-1 start.

Un-Happy birthday for LeBron: Heat beat Cavs

MIAMI (AP)—LeBron James keeps getting the same birthday present: A loss.

Dwyane Wade had 21 points and 12 assists, Mario Chalmers added 21 points and eight assists, and the Miami Heat dropped King James' pro record on birthdays to 0-3 with a 104-95 win over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Tuesday night.

On the day he turned 24, James scored a fitting 24 of his 38 points in the second half, almost enough to rally Cleveland out of its biggest deficit of the season, a 16-point hole at halftime.

But the Heat put it away with a 16-3 run over a 4-minute stretch of the final quarter, handing the Cavs just their fifth loss in 31 games this season.

Daequan Cook scored 17 points—with all five field goals being 3-pointers—and Shawn Marion had 14 points and 11 rebounds. Udonis Haslem added 13 points and 10 rebounds for Miami.

Delonte West scored 20 for Cleveland, which had won six straight.

For much of the second half, it seemed as though Cleveland would do what it did Sunday against Miami—pull off a huge rally. The Cavaliers trailed by 10 points in the fourth quarter on their home floor two nights earlier against the Heat, only to dominate the rest of the way and win 93-86.

The birthday boy almost pulled it off again.

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' Daniel Gibson, right, defends as Heat's Mario Chalmers drives to the basket during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game in Miami, Tuesday Dec. 30, 2008.

James hit a 3-pointer to pull Cleveland to 78-77 with 8:55 remaining, then turned and had something to say to the Miami bench, something he did often in Sunday's Cavs comeback.

But this time, Miami got the last word.

Chalmers hit a 3-pointer with 7:11 left, then stripped James and went in for an easy layup, part of a 9-0 run that gave Miami an 87-77 lead. Later, Chalmers hit Cook for a 3-pointer, putting the Heat up by 14, and the crowd cheered as the rookie guard from Kansas pointed skyward and Wade pumped a fist in celebration.

Trail Blazers 91, Celtics 86

At Portland, Ore., Steve Blake had 21 points, LaMarcus Aldridge added 20 and the short-handed Portland Trail Blazers beat Boston, sending the NBA champions to their third loss in four games.

Playing without All-Star guard Brandon Roy, the Blazers snapped a seven-game losing streak against Boston and pulled into a tie atop the Northwest Division with Denver. Reserve forward Travis Outlaw had 17 points for Portland and Greg Oden added 13 points and 11 rebounds despite injuring his ankle in practice Monday.

Hawks 110, Pacers 104

At Indianapolis, Joe Johnson scored 12 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter to help streaking Atlanta beat Indiana.

Josh Smith had 24 points, Mike Bibby scored 15 and Al Horford added 12 points and 14 rebounds for the Hawks, who have won six straight games and nine of 10.

Danny Granger had 25 points, Jarrett Jack 22 and Jeff Foster finished with 12 points and 12 rebounds for the Pacers in their fourth consecutive loss.

Knicks 93, Bobcats 89

At Charlotte, N.C., Wilson Chandler scored seven of his 19 points in the final 4 minutes, and New York beat Charlotte to snap a six-game losing streak and improve to 2-0 against former coach Larry Brown.

Gerald Wallace scored 21 points and Boris Diaw had 20 points against his former coach in Phoenix, Mike D'Antoni, who said he was treating Tuesday's game as a playoff game to get his struggling Knicks in sync.

Suns 101, Grizzlies 89

At Memphis, Tenn., Leandro Barbosa scored 28 points, Shaquille O'Neal added 24 to move into eighth place on the NBA scoring list and Phoenix beat Memphis without ailing star Steve Nash.

Hakim Warrick led Memphis with 25 points, while Marc Gasol finished with 16 points and 13 rebounds.

Hornets 97, Wizards 85

At New Orleans, Chris Paul had 15 points, 16 assists and 10 rebounds for his third triple-double of the season, and the Hornets beat Washington.

Antawn Jamison scored 22 for Washington, while Mike James added 16 points and seven assists against the team that traded him to the Wizards this season.

Bucks 100, Spurs 98

At San Antonio, Michael Redd had 25 points and 10 rebounds, and Milwaukee hung on to beat San Antonio when Tim Duncan missed a layup with 3.8 seconds to go.

Duncan, who faked past Bogut to get open for the last layup try, scored 22 points. Michael Finley made eight of 10 shots and had 20 points for the Spurs, while Tony Parker had 19 points and 10 assists.

Mavericks 107, Timberwolves 100

At Dallas, Jason Terry scored 24 of his 29 points in the second half, and Dallas rallied from a 29-point deficit to beat Minnesota.

Al Jefferson scored 21 points for the Timberwolves, who blew their largest lead in franchise history.

Kings 92, Clippers 90

At Sacramento, Calif., playing his first game in nearly three weeks, Kevin Martin scored 20 points and Sacramento snapped a six-game losing streak by beating Los Angeles.

Rookie guard Eric Gordon scored 24 points for the Clippers.

Cruz: Oceania caging scoring champ

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Jurors tasked to select members of the FIBA Oceania All-Star may have had snubbed Jericho Cruz, but still they could not hide the fact that the CNMI youth cager conquered the scoring department in the 2008 Oceania Youth Tournament in Guam.

Cruz lit up the scoreboard of the University of Guam Fieldhouse in Mangilao averaging 23 points per game in three matches in Pool A.

Cruz started sluggishly in the FIBA Oceania nailing only only 10 points in the Junior Nationals' 61-102 loss to Guam But the Junior Nationals' consistent top scorer in various leagues and tournaments on Saipan, found his marks in the second game, erupting for 29 points in the CNMI's 93-84 win over Papua New Guinea.

In the third game, Cruz engaged New Caledonia's gunners in a shootout, posting his highest points the tournament with 30 markers.

In three games in the elimination round, Cruz shot 27-for-57 from the field for a decent 47.4 percent field goal shooting. He was 11-for-19 from the 15-foot line for a 57.9 percent clip and was 4-for-13 from the 3-point area.

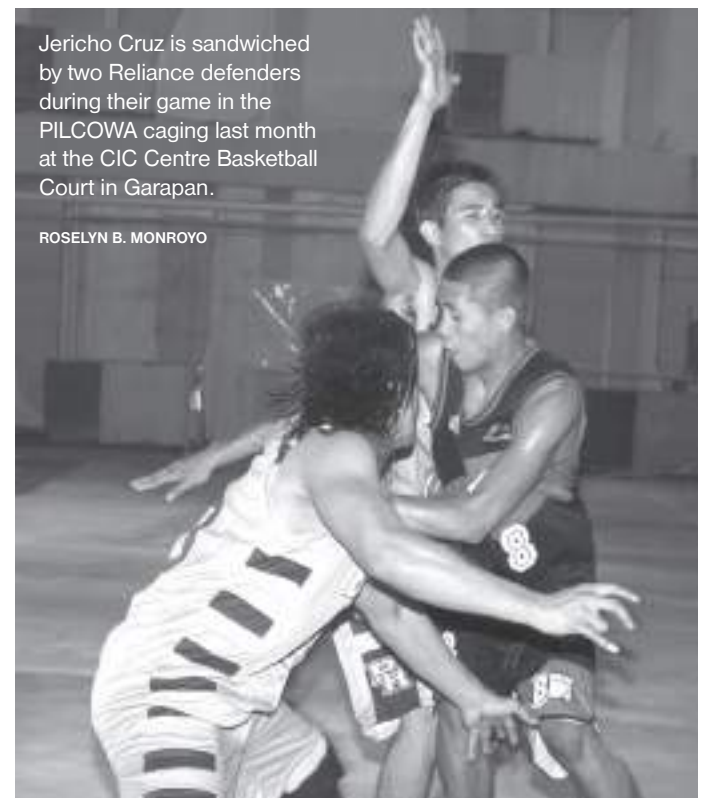
Cruz collected 21 rebounds, 18 assists, seven steals, and two blocks in three games showing those who selected the All-Star Team that he is an all-around player and is deserving to make the team, too.

Cruz's impressive games did not end in the pool play, as he continued to burn the hoops in the playoffs.

He hit 23 points in the CNMI's 74-97 lost to Tahiti. Cruz picked up where he left off against Palau, duplicating his output in the Commonwealth's 100-90 win.

In the CNMI's battle for fifth place against Fiji, Cruz, for the third time, fired 23 points in a losing effort.

After the Oceania caging, Cruz returned to Saipan and led the CNMI Junior Nationals to a title win over the Rollers, 70-52, in the 2008 Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League. He swept the regular season and Finals MVP awards of the youth caging.



Jericho Cruz is sandwiched by two Reliance defenders during their game in the PILCOWA caging last month at the CIC Centre Basketball Court in Garapan.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

'Longest game ever'

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The finals series in the 2008 Budweiser Saipan Major League between the Ford Rangers and Rock Steady made it into the record books as the most stretched title series since the league was established in 1982.

No thanks to the rolling power outages and Mother Nature that tested the finalists' patience.

The best-of-five championship showdown took about three weeks to conclude with Rock Steady outlasting the Ford Rangers, 3-2.

Game 1 was set for Aug. 9, but it rained the night before the series opener making the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield unplayable.

The Ford Rangers and Rock Steady waited for two more days before Game 1 was played. The Ford Rangers handed the then undefeated Rock Steady its first loss of the season with a 15-10 win in Game 1.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Members and supporters of Rock Steady pose for a group photo after conquering the longest-ever played title series in Saipan Major League history.

On Aug. 13, Rock Steady was leading the Rangers, 10-3, at the top of the seventh inning of Game 2 when the lights went off.

The Rangers and Rock Steady went to the "Tan Ko" field the next night, but were not able to play due to the power outage, anew. When Game 2 resumed on Aug. 15, the Rangers did not have enough players allowing Rock Steady to win and tie the series.

Game 3 was played on Aug. 18, but was halted at the top of the ninth due to the power outage with the game tied at 6-all. The match continued on Aug. 19 with the Rangers escaping with a 9-6 win in extra inning to move a win away from clinching the title.

Rock Steady swept the last two games, which were also stretched out, to complete a come-from-behind title win.

Game 4 was played a few minutes after Game 3 finished.

Rock Steady was leading, 8-3, at the top of the seventh inning when darkness filled the ballfield, forcing the cancellation of the game for the nth time.

The continuation of Game 4 was set for Aug. 22, but was cancelled anew due to a soggy field.

On Aug. 25, Rock Steady claimed Game 4 with an 8-4 victory, to tie the series. Game 5 was scheduled on the same night, but the power went off around 8pm with the Rangers leading, 2-1, at the top of the third inning.

Finally, on Aug. 29, the title series ended with Rock Steady winning the deciding Game 5, 5-3.

Mighty Mieko soldiers on

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Whether it be suddenly disintegrating shoes in XTERRA Japan, an incoming tornado and foot blisters in Ironman Kansas, and stomach flu during the XTERRA World Championships, Mieko Carey always manages to cross the finish line with a big smile on her face.

Even as she dominated local races in 2008, Carey made her mark by taking part in conquering the three aforementioned off-island triathlons last year.

The 2008 XTERRA World Championships was the biggest feather in her cap last year, as Carey finally able to accomplish her dream of standing on the podium following a third place finish in the women's 30-34 age group with a time of 3:53:38 last Oct. 26 in Maui.

"XTERRA World Championship was my biggest accomplishment. I wanted to finish on the podium and I did. I trained and focused just on that race for three months. I stopped partying and drinking for a while which is almost a bigger challenge than the Maui course! I had a fun race. I used all of my power as I got sick during the race. I was fortunate enough to do many races this year.

"I really concentrated on triathlons this year. Guam XTERRA and Ironman Kansas were new experiences for me. The Hell of the Marianas was my first road bike race. I was very surprised and happy at how I did. Now I feel like 2008 is finished successfully. All of the challenges I faced this year made me stronger than the past year and will help me in the future. I am excited about racing in 2009 and I hope my shoes don't break! Thanks to all of my training partners and friends who helped me during training and racing," said Mieko of her adventures in 2008.

Mieko Carey crosses the finish line in the 2008 XTERRA Japan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

David among the Goliaths

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The U14 Boys National Football Team that competed in the East Asian Football Federation's U14 Festival may had been dwarfed by nine other squads, as far as ceiling and playing experience are concerned, but the CNMI strikers showed the biggest heart in the tournament in Guam.

From start to finish, the CNMI bets never let their guards down, hustled for every play, chased the ball, and banged bodies with opponents in a fair manner.

EAFF.COM

CNMI midfielder Jaythan Camacho steals the ball from a striker from Mongolia during their game in the East Asian Football Federation's U14 Festival in Guam.

For these, the CNMI strikers were called the "young warriors" of the tournament.

"Our 80-lb. defenders took rockets from other teams' 170-lb. forwards, again and again. Ten-year-old Hunter Jewell took down a towering forward on a clean tackle in front of the goal which prevented a shot on goal. There were many miraculous saves from players, especially from our goalkeepers Caleb Arriola and Josiah Orlando. After playing North Korea and watching the amazing efforts of Arriola everyone in the crowd, including officials and spectators, clapped as he left the field," coach Nick Swaim was quoted as saying in July after the six-day tournament.

Besides Arriola, Orlando, and Hunter, other members of the team were Mickey Coleman, Devin Atalig, Hunter Thorpe, Jaythan Camacho, Crosby Schultz, Bo Barry, Stacy Escueta, Jake Lee, Angelo Jones, Andrew Johnson, Misaki Cramer, Hirai Misami, Jehn Joyner, Keoni Borja, and Clay McCullough-Stearns.

"Few players would have had the tenacity and moxie to put themselves in a position to play football giants knowing the odds were stacked against them. We sent 18 willing players from the CNMI that did. They not only fought but they improved dramatically over the course of the week. They learned so much about the game by playing boys that were better than them. They rose to the occasion and will make our youth program stronger as a result," he added.

The CNMI strikers played against the experienced players of China, Guam, Hong Kong, Chinese-Taipei, Mongolia, Macao, and Korea.

OCEANIA

From Page 28

Among the top men performers of the area championships were New Caledonian high jumper Frederic Erin, Papua New Guinea's hurdler Mowen Boino, Fijian runner Isoa Me, then Olympic-bound Aunese Curreen of Samoa.

Papua New Guinea's quartet of amazing runners—Mae Koime, Toea Wisil, Salome Dell, and Betty Burua—also didn't disappoint and led the women performers in the 2008 Oceania Championships.

At the end of almost a week of non-stop action at the Oleai Track and Field, New Zealand topped the medal standings with 17 gold medals to go along with its 10 silver and six bronze.

Fiji leapfrogged past proverbial runner-up Australia in the medal standings, winding up with 11 gold medals as well eight silver and three bronze.

Samoa was another country that finished ahead of powerhouse Australia, finishing with 10 gold, three silver, and a bronze.

Australia, meanwhile, closed out the area championships with nine gold, 11 silver, and five bronze medals to its name.

Papua New Guinea came away with nine gold, six silver, and five bronze medals, while New Caledonia finished with a haul of four gold, three silver, and two bronze medals.

Making up the rest of the medal standings were Guam (4 gold, 6 silver, and 13 bronze), Tahiti (4-6-5), Cook Islands (2-3-5), Tonga (1-7-5), CNMI (1-6-9), Solomon Islands (1-2-2), Kiribati (1-1-2), Norfolk Islands (1-0-1), Palau (one silver), Vanuatu (two bronze), and Nauru (one bronze).

Incidentally, the lack of resources and access to first-rate facilities didn't deter the hosts from making waves in the area championships as Jacque Wonenberg won the islands' lone gold medal in the women's pentathlon.

Also contributing in the Commonwealth's 16-medal haul were the silver medals of Trevor Ogumoro in octathlon and Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel in the steeplechase.

Big Leaguers advance to World Series

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

3 The CNMI Big League All-Stars were the "last man standing" after it beat the Philippines, 8-7, in the 2008 Asia-Pacific Regional Little League Tournament last July 3 at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

The CNMI finished round-robin play with an immaculate 2-0 win-loss slate following wins over Guam and the Philippines.

The hero of the championship match was relief pitcher Shane Yamada, who stopped the Philippines' late-game rally with a maestro performance from the mound.

The team also got a boost from the explosive bats of Jesus Iguel, Vincent Sablan, and Nunu Kapileo. It also helped that the Philippines shot themselves in the foot with costly errors all throughout the finals.

MARK RABAGO
The CNMI Big League All-Stars celebrate atop the mound after beating the Philippines, 8-7, in the 2008 Asia-Pacific Regional Little League Tournament.

CNMI Big League All-Stars manager Robert Magofna said his team won the championships game because they wanted it more.

"I think the guys just went out and played their guts out. They just really wanted to win the game. I think the Philippines put out a very good game. But we just wanted to win it for our fans. We're the Big Leaguers and we have to show and motivate our Junior and Senior Leaguers who both lost in the finals. That's what motivated us to win and we want those kids to know that we are always here for them."

Unfortunately, the CNMI Big Leaguers' success on home soil didn't carry over in the World Series in Easley, South Carolina.

The CNMI lost all its four games in the mainland via the 10-run mercy rule as the huge time difference and high level competition resulted in one-sided loses in the part of the local boys at the J.B. "Red" Owens Complex.

Dominican Republic throttled the CNMI in its debut, 16-1. The game against Puerto Rico was worse, as the Latin America I champions no-hit the Commonwealth in a 19-0 shutout.

After a rest day the carnage continued as the CNMI bowed to Canada, 2-12. The CNMI then wrapped up its 2008 Big League World Series stint with a 2-12 loss against Germany.

Swim records galore

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

4 Low water level at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi due to frequent power outages did not stop CNMI swimmers from making record-breaking performances in 2008.

Records were shattered one event after another with Rezne Wong, Kai Staal, Kensuke and Shin Kimura, and Grace Kimball putting their names in the CNMI swimming history.

Wong started the record splash during the Saipan Swim Club-hosted Heptathlon Virtual Meet. He set records in the 50m breaststroke (33.88 seconds) and 100m breaststroke (1:12.19) in the 15 to 16 age group. Wong's time in the 50m breaststroke was also a CNMI National Record then before he eclipsed his own mark last month during the 2008 Guam International Swim Meet clocking in at 33.18 seconds. Before the Guam meet, Wong also held the 50m breaststroke record at 33.39 seconds, which he posted during the SSC-Tsunami Saipan Dual Meet in October.

Wong was already 17 years old when he set records in May in the 17 to 18 age group's 50m breaststroke (34.05 seconds), and in the 100m breaststroke (1:10.91/age group and CNMI National marks).

Seven months after, Wong smashed his mark in the 100m breaststroke, clocking in at 1:10.21 (17 to 18 age group and CNMI National record) in the Guam yearend event.

The Marianas High School student also set a CNMI National Record and 17 to 18 age group mark in the 200m breaststroke with his time of 2:30.54 in Guam last month.

Staal spent the last three months of 2008 season shattering one record after another.

In October, Staal broke two records in the boys' 13 to 14 age group. He timed in 2:07.16 in the 200m freestyle and 26.18 seconds in the 50m freestyle.

In November, he posted 25.68 seconds in the 50m freestyle of the 200m medley free relay swim for Saipan International School. In the 100m freestyle, Staal recorded 57.46 seconds.

Finally, in December Staal swam in longer freestyle events, but still made new marks in the 200m (2.07.15) and 400m (4:34.13). He also set new records in the 50m breaststroke (35.33 seconds) and 100m breaststroke (1:16.07).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS
From left, Kai Staal, Rezne Wong, and Kensuke and Shin Kimura. Inset, Grace Kimball in action.

Shin Kimura made it to the record books of 2008 with his 9:46.04 time in December in the 800m freestyle swim in the boys' 15 to 16 age group.

Younger brother Kensuke owned four records in the 11 to 12 age group in 2008.

In October, he timed in at 10:23.35 in the 800m freestyle and 4:54.33 in the 400m free during the All Schools meet in November.

Earlier in May, Kensuke clocked a new best in the 200m breaststroke (3:04) and set a new mark in the 1500m freestyle in July with his 19:43.27

SSC's Grace Kimball was the lone female swimmer to barge into the record books in 2008 posting 1:05.92 in the girls' 11 to 12 age group's 100m freestyle competition of the 2008 SSC Summer Classic.

Who's next: Anicia Santos

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

6 The CNMI sports community is used to reading tennis players, swimmers, and sprinters making waves off-island. How about a volleyball player holding her ground in a competitive league and tournaments in the mainland? That doesn't ring a bell, isn't it? Especially, for a player who left Saipan 10 years ago.

Her name is Anicia Santos, born to Roque Santos and Dr. Christine Ebert-Santos, who decided to move their family to the mainland to help Carlos, one of Anicia's four siblings, pursue his football dreams.

From being a small kid, Anicia grew up to be a 6-foot-1 stopper who played in the 2008 Junior Olympics Girls Championships and became a member of the California Polytechnic State University (San Luis, Obispo) Women's Volleyball Team.

The Mustangs are in the NCAA Division I and is ranked No. 14 in the 2008 season.

The Junior Olympics was held in July last year at the Dallas Convention Center in Dallas, Texas with 9,500 athletes from 788 teams in the U.S. in various age groups (from 14 to 18-and-above) competing.

Before joining the U.S. Olympics, Santos suited up for the U.S. Youth National Team and played in various tournaments in southeastern Europe in 2006.

Members of the youth team are trained to someday be part of the U.S. National Team, which competes in Olympics.

If Santos one day makes it to the U.S. National Team and the U.S. spikers qualify for the Olympics, she will be the first CNMI athlete to become an Olympian.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Anicia Santos plays defense on the net during a game in the 2008 Junior Olympics Girls Championships in Dallas, Texas.

The CNMI is not a member of the Olympic family thus it can not send athletes directly to the quadrennial meet. A CNMI athlete can only play in the Olympics if he tries out for a U.S. team and get selected.

The Commonwealth's membership to the Olympic family is considered a long shot due to its political union with the U.S.

Major year for Minor

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

5 For the second straight year, Thea Minor's exploits on the tennis courts were worth mentioning.

In 2007, Minor, along with fellow CNMI junior tennis player Ji Hoon Heo, graced *Saipan Tribune*'s top stories after conquering local tournaments and holding her ground against Pacific/Oceania netters in Fiji and in New Zealand.

In 2008, a much improved and much stronger Minor ruled local tennis tournaments, anew playing against much older foes.

Off-island, Minor added New Caledonia in her journey for international exposures beside the usual trip to Fiji and New Zealand.

After a semis finish in the Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Fiji in 2007, Minor placed third in the girls' 14-and-under division of the same event in 2008.

From Fiji, he went to New Caledonia, trained against some of the best junior players in the French colony and won a couple of games there.

Her impressive showings in Fiji and acquired skills in New Caledonia allowed her to earn a spot for the New Zealand-bound ITF Pacific Touring Team, again.

In her return trip to New Zealand, Minor did not leave any of the three tournaments empty-handed.

She won a doubles event and placed second in a singles and another doubles event in Waikato. The 13-year-old netter hopped on the bus headed to Poverty Bay where she got her fourth medal (a silver in the girls' 14-and-under singles).

Minor ended her successful New Zealand trip in Auckland and saved the best for last winning her third gold medal (doubles) and another silver (singles).

The tournament in Auckland was the hardest with Minor and teammates Rafael Jones and Christian Miller having to travel eight hours and play after only a few minutes of rest. Still, exhausted and excited to return home, Minor maintained her focus to surpass her achievement in her New Zealand debut.

Minor won only two medals in 2007, six in 2008, and is looking for more in 2009.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Thea Minor shows off the six medals she won in New Zealand last month.

Un-Happy birthday for LeBron: Heat beat Cavs

LeBron James keeps getting the same birthday present: A loss.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Broncos fire coach Mike Shanahan

He was known as a genius, a mastermind and, yes, a Super Bowl champion. Shockingly, though, Mike Shanahan has a new title: Unemployed coach.

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SPORTS STORY OF THE YEAR

Oceania Championships and Grand Prix

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Over 250 world class athletes from 19 nations took part in the 2008 Oceania Championships and Oceania Grand Prix held from June 23 to 28 on Saipan.

The sheer number of participants alone, which included a smattering of Olympians, is enough to make the area championships one of the Top 10 sports stories of the year.

But if you add that no less than Oceania Athletics Association executive director Yvonne Mullins said that the 2008 Saipan Oceania Championships was the best she was ever been part of then, hands down, it should be *Saipan Tribune*'s Sports Story of the Year.

"This I think is better than anything I've ever been to before. It's been the best Oceania Championships that I've ever had the opportunity to attend," Mullins said the evening before hopping into a plane bound for her native Australia.

"The competition has been great. The LOC (local organizing committee) has just been absolutely out of this world. The local organizing committee is better than any local organizing committee I've ever had the opportunity to work with. They've been fabulous," she added. "If you're going to run a successful Oceania Championships you should need a lot of things to go right and what happened here this week is everything went right. In a scale of 1-10, I would give the 2008 Oceania Championships a 9.9," she added.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

No less than Oceania Athletics Association executive director Yvonne Mullins said that the 2008 Saipan Oceania Championships was the best she was ever been part of. Photo above shows participants of the women's sprint line up in the starting blocks.

Heo gets coveted ITF ranking

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Ji Hoon Heo just gets getting better and better and last year was no exception as 2008 saw the tennis phenom reach another milestone by getting in the ITF junior rankings.

The 16-year-old Marianas High School student did the trick last June after he and doubles partner Lorenzo Pineda of Vanuatu reached the quarterfinals in the 2008 Open Junior BNP Paribas de Nouvelle Caledonie in Noumea.

INTERNATIONAL TENNIS FEDERATION

Ji Hoon Heo in action in the 2008 Open Junior BNP Paribas de Nouvelle Caledonie in Noumea.

The New Caledonia tournament also saw Heo reach the Round of 16 in the singles division before losing 6-1, 6-0 to Vaitea Lo of Tahiti on account on an ankle injury.

A hobbling Heo and Pineda eventually had to forfeit their match against Olivier Lemaitre and Sylver Schorge of New Caledonia. Heo, however, got 15 points for reaching the quarters before bidding *adieu* to the French territory.

Heo was ranked 1,425 following his New Caledonia stint but he failed to move up in the rankings after lukewarm performances in ITF junior tournaments in Japan and the Philippines later in the year.

"This year definitely has had its up and downs. I was at my peak in New Caledonia and I nearly beat a guy that was ranked No. 300 in the world then I got my ankle injury and then couldn't play. I had some confidence issues and the ankle issue kept bugging me. But this year, I learned many things from many people by traveling a lot. I had many wins and losses and learned a lot through my losses. I will use all the experience I got from 2008 and try to use it during 2009. I think 2009 will be great and 2008 really prepared me for the next year," he said.

Heo, however, vowed not to rest on his laurels and is already outlining his goals for 2009.

"I've always wanted to be ranked in the world and its just great I finally did it, but my New Year's resolution is to make it into the Top 400 in the world and I will do my best to achieve that goal. I really need support from Saipan in order to achieve and I hope I could receive a lot of support. For 2009, I will try to play more than 10 ITF-sanctioned tournaments and try gaining a better ranking," he said.

Making wishes

Well, we made it to 2009. Happy New Year to everyone lucky enough to be alive today, especially since we didn't ask to be born. Yes, that's you.

Last week I listed my New Year's Resolutions which are basically the same every year. In contrast, my New Year's wishes are from left field, rookie ideas if you will, as this is a whole new ballgame we're playing now with new rules coming, thanks or no thanks, from the turf of the Washington Nationals. Keeping with New Age semantics, it's a new paradigm, baby.

Consequently, my number one wish for local sports is for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to adopt a Russia-China visa waiver program for the CNMI, followed by wish 1A which is continuation of the transient worker program with preference given to workers already here.

Say what?

That's right, sports fans. The vitality of local sports is dependent on 1) people and 2) resources. Not only have we seen a significant exodus of our top athletes who seek better economic opportunities elsewhere, a drop in business revenue results in a) less sponsorship for teams and b) less funds for maintenance of facilities. Big Kudos to all you who sponsor sports teams; double kudos for youth sports.

As people in the CNMI know all too well, from the boom days of the early '90s to these times of bust, an island's economy comes in a box labeled, "FRAGILE." Oops, we dropped it. Score that an error on us.

I wish I had a magic wand. You know what I would do (among other things)? I'd wave it over Ada Gymnasium and transform it into the facility that will pass Oceania basketball requirements so it can host the highest level basketball ever played in Micronesia. Saipan secured the rights on the condition it meet basic facility requirements. The heavily used Ada Gym just hasn't had the money to be maintained as it should since it was spruced up nicely in June, 2006 for the Micronesian Games.

I wish Saipan becomes the spring training home for Korea's professional baseball teams. Like a field of dreams, build it and they will come … that is, if the won is strong enough.

I wish Saipan baseball players would win college scholarships. I wish Saipan has its first professional baseball player (that's been on my wish list for many years and most likely will remain a fixture on future lists too).

For our young, talented mixed martial arts fighters, I wish at least one of them ascends to the UFC or succeeds internationally.

Most wishes are for something new or different. I have a wish for something I hope doesn't change: the vibrancy of a small core of organizers who keep sports going strong on Saipan for everyone else to enjoy. You know who they are if you're a player or parent.

Someone smarter than me once said, "Health is everything. Without it, you are nothing." With that comes my final wish which goes out to everyone, "Healthy New Year!"

And good riddance to 2008. Glad to see you go.

OFF THE BENCH

By BOB COLDEEN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Coldeen is a longtime journalist in the CNMI and is currently the news director of KSPN2